■ Across / A20
Cecile plays with her soul

■ Business / B1
Hike in prices of basic goods looms

■ Entertainment/ A31
Enrique Iglesias Manila concert canceled

■World/ A11
7 ex-Soviet bloc nations join Nato

Tanong ng Bayan/ A24
Napurnadang welga: Mga driver o gobyerno ang naka-isa? ALAS-10 NG GABI

Neo-Nazi admits bombings after watching 'The Passion'

A NORWEGIAN neo-Nazi has confessed to two bombings a decade ago after a pang of repentance triggered by watching Mel Gibson's controversial film "The Passion of the Christ."

It was the second confession sparked by the film, which has been criticized for its graphic violence. A Texan man admitted last week, after seeing the movie, to murdering a

NEO-NAZI/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Erap offers to lease villa to gov't for P1 a year

By Armand N. Nocum

AT P1 a year, it's a steal.

The man recently tagged by Transparency International as the 10th most corrupt leader in the world quoted that amount

ANO YUN, SUHOL ?

ERAP/ A9

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Wednesday, March 31, 2004 ★★ 68 pages / 7 sections / vol. 19 / no. 114 P18
website: www.inq7.net

Metro bomb plot foiled

GMA announces arrest of 4 Sayyaf terrorists

By Juliet Labog-Javellana, Christian V. Esguerra and Alcuin Papa

A PLOT by the Abu Sayyaf to bring its campaign of terror to Metro Manila has been thwarted.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday security forces had arrested four members of a deadly Abu Sayyaf cell, seized 36 kilos of explosives from them, and foiled their plan to bomb trains and malls around Metro Manila on the scale of the Madrid attacks, which killed nearly 200 people.

She said one of the four had claimed credit for the Feb. 27 explosion and fire on the SuperFerry 14 near Manila Bay which left more than 100 passengers dead.

The alleged ferry bomber, identified as Redendo Cain Dellosa, had told investigators that he planted TNT in a television set on the ferry, a top security official said, according to The Associated Press.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Dellosa, a Muslim convert, confessed after his arrest that "he was passenger 51" and that he had stashed TNT in a TV set that he carried onto the ferry.

The Abu Sayyaf earlier identified its "suicide bomber" as Arnulfo Alvarado and said he was in Bunk 51.

After planting the bomb in the passenger cabin, Dellosa said he escaped, the official told AP.

"We have preempted a Madrid-level attack on the metropolis by capturing an explosives cache of 80 pounds of TNT," Ms Macapagal said in a press conference at Villamor Air Base prior to leaving for an election campaign rally in Naga City.

She was referring to the March 11 train bombings in the Spanish capital which had been blamed on extremists linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

METRO/ A8

Exec notes undue haste in Maynilad bailout deal

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE METROPOLITAN Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) board of trustees approved the "bailout" of Maynilad Water Services with "undue haste" and without scrutinizing the firm's financial status, a high ranking MWSS official said yesterday.

The official noted that about half of Maynilad's assets valued at P21 billion were not assets in the real sense because these were "deferred costs" or expenses.

The source said the MWSS board approved the deal on March 17 after Justice Undersecretary Manuel A. J. Teehankee talked to the directors individually during the board meeting that day.

He added that the board as a whole did not even thoroughly discuss the merits of the planned reorganization of Maynilád, known as Amendment 2 to the concession agreement.

"There has been undue haste in approving the deal. There is little understanding of the ramifications of the plan. There was no due diligence exerted to examine Maynilad's assets," the official said.

He said the MWSS should have ordered an audit of Maynilad's assets to find out its real financial state in light of its implied admission before the Quezon City Regional Trial Court that it was insolvent when it applied for rehabilitation.

"In the private sector, they would double-check first the facts before any takeover. Why is it that in this case the government refus-

EXEC/ A8

WE WANT PEACE NOT WAR
NOT WAR
NOT WAR

AL FRITZ ERNAC

MARANAO PEACE MARCH
Young Maranao girls carry placards bearing peace messages during the visit of an advance party of an international ceasefire monitoring team headed by Malaysian Brig, Gen. Dato Zulkifeli bin Mohd Zain to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's stronghold in Camp Bushra in Butig, Lanao del Sur. *(See story on Page A7.)*

Luli says mom's critics don't know governance

By Tonette Orejas
and Martin P. Marfil

MABALACAT, Pampanga—Evangelina "Luli" Arroyo thinks the disqualification cases filed against her mother are funny.

"[The cases] are really comedy, *di ba?*" President Macapagal-Arroyo's only daughter said yesterday in response to a question from the INQUIRER. "*Parang, o, sige, mag-imbento pa kayo* (Go ahead, make up some more charges). The opposition likes to say [she has done nothing] over the past three years, but it is also complaining that she is also using government projects."

"So what is it, really?" Luli demanded. "*Ano ba talaga? Wala ba talaga siyang nagawa,' o naiinis kayo na marami siyang programa* (Has she really done nothing, or are you just annoyed that she has many programs)?"

Luli spoke with the INQUIRER shortly before she took part in a forum with businessmen and professionals in Pampanga, her mother's home province.

TONEE DESPOJO/CEBU DAILY NEWS

PRESIDENT Macapagal's daughter Luli Arroyo fights back.

She said the problem with her mother's critics was that "they don't know what governance is about."

On the impact of the controversies hounding her mother, Luli said it was expected that "many

LULI SAYS/ A10

Leave me alone, De Castro's daughter tells mom

By Carlito Pablo
and Christine O. Avendaño

AS THE PARENTS squabbled publicly in a family feud that has become the nation's latest scandal, their daughter Manueli broke down on television, pleading to be allowed to live in peace.

Her father, administration vice presidential candidate Sen. Noli de Castro, has accused her mother of being an irresponsible parent and of having been involved with several men.

Her mother, Pacita Torralba, has accused the senator of being a liar and of portraying their daughter as an illegitimate child.

Emerging in public for the first time on Monday evening, 29-year-old Manueli took her father's side.

"*Sige na po, tigilan na po n'yo ako … Masaya na po kami* (Please, leave me alone … We are now happy)," the daughter, now married, said between sobs in an interview on ABS-CBN television.

Her remarks were intended for Torralba.

"*Nasasaktan ako. Tahimik na po ang buhay ko. May sarili na po akong pamilya, masaya na po ako ngayon. Sana naman po, huwag na niya akong guluhin … Tama na po 'yon* (I am hurt. I am living a peaceful life now. I have my own

LEAVE ME/ A10

Jeepney fare hike fails to stop transport strike

By Christian V. Esguerra,
Tina Santos
and the PDI Bureaus

A JEEPNEY strike yesterday crippled public transport in a number of cities and towns across the country, but it fizzled out in other areas because of the 75-centavo fare increase that Malacañang approved on the eve of the nationwide protest.

The lifting of the "color coding" scheme, the fielding of government vehicles, including Army trucks, and the end of classes helped cushion the impact of the strike in Metro Manila, according to authorities.

Officials in Cebu City persuaded jeepney drivers to call off the mass action with gifts of rice and canned goods.

But reports reaching the INQUIRER showed that at least 90 percent of public transport was paralyzed in Angeles City and several towns in Pampanga, Southern Tagalog, Aklan, northern Cebu and the cities of Cagayan de Oro, Butuan and Davao.

Thousands of workers at the Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga failed to report for work.

Nevertheless, the Philippine National Police said the situation was "generally peaceful" in Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Bicol, Western Visayas, Northern Mindanao, Southern Mindanao, Central Mindanao and the Caraga region, where the transport strike took place.

In Tagum City in Davao del Norte, police dispersed protesters, according to a spokesperson of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan in Southern Mindanao.

Other reports said stones were hurled at

JEEPNEY/ A10

EDD ARAJAS

STRIKING transport workers persuade a jeepney driver to join their protest at the Welcome Rotonda at the Manila-Quezon City boundary.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly over Mindanao.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/03/31/04

Lopez deals worth P156 B

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo granted the powerful Lopez family contracts and deals worth a total of P156 billion in three years in her "obsessive pursuit to win" in the May elections.

Opposition senatorial candidate Juan Ponce Enrile, nemesis of Meralco and the Lopez group of companies, made these allegations yesterday as he described the contracts as "questionable and anomalous."

He cited several billion-peso transactions and compromise deals entered into by the Macapagal administration with the Lopezes:

1. P90 billion in National Power Corp. losses to resolve PPA (purchased power adjustment) controversy.
2. P16 billion Napocor loss on its claim against Meralco for the unilateral abrogation of a long-term supply contract.
3. A total of about P30 billion (P10 billion a year) in overcharging of consumers.
4. At least P20 billion in Maynilad bailout.

Tatad: North road another bad deal

By Carlito Pablo

OPPOSITION senatorial candidate Francisco Tatad yesterday disclosed what he described as another alleged "sweetheart deal" between Malacañang and the Lopez family on top of the alleged government bailout of the Lopez-controlled Maynilad Water Services.

Tatad said this other deal involved the Lopez Group's rehabilitation of the 81-km North Luzon Expressway project which will give it the right to collect toll for 30 years from the roadway "without having to infuse any visible capital" and through "highly creative pencil-pushing."

Tatad said that "at present prices, this means a gross income of as much as P40 million a day, P1.2 billion a month, P14.4 billion a year, and P432 billion in 30 years."

Tatad also said that the road rehabilitation represented a cost of P22 million per kilometer, making the project the "most expensive road rehabilitation project in memory."

Boo Chanco, senior vice president for communications of the Lopez Group's Benpres Holdings Corp., said Tatad's claim was "another cheap political stunt of Mr. Tatad designed to capture the INQUIRER headlines."

"Is he out of his mind? How could a project approved by three Presidents from Ramos, Estrada and Arroyo be a sweetheart deal? It went through the Toll Regulatory Board and was reviewed by the Department of Justice and Malacañang's legal office over an eight-year period," Chanco said.

Chanco said the Lopez Group and its partners have already spent $70 million on the project, $56.75 million of which came from the group alone. Of this amount, the Philippine National Construction Corp., the state company that is the government's main agency in infrastructure and development construction projects, accounts for only $3.6 million.

Sole operator

The PNCC is the sole operator and franchise-holder of the North and South Luzon Tollways. It has entered into several joint venture projects to upgrade and expand the two expressways.

He said the Lopez Group and its partners have committed a total of $117.5 million in equity and arranged for project financing of $253.5 million with the Asian Development Bank, the Export Finance & Insurance Corp., and a consortium of international banks.

"Right now, the Lopez Group is not receiving a centavo of collections, all of which go to the PNCC until such time that the project is completed ... It is actually the PNCC that will earn 8 percent of total gross revenue once the Lopez Group starts operating the expressway for the use of its franchise but without contributing a centavo," Chanco said.

Citing the alleged Maynilad bailout and the North Expressway project, Tatad said President Macapagal-Arroyo must "show the nation some proof that she and the Lopezes have not become the strongest political cronies and business partners at the expense of the Filipino people."

Tatad said he was able to secure official documents regarding the deal from the PNCC and detailed the chronology of how the deal was allegedly "cooked up."

He said that in 1995, the Lopez Group's Benpres Holdings offered to build the 8-km tollway from Tipo in Dinalupihan, Bataan to Subic as part of preparations for the country's hosting of the Leaders' Summit of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation in Subic, Zambales.

FPIDC

The project was undertaken by the First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp., a Benpres subsidiary. The road is now known as the Tipo-Subic Tollway and the FPIDC collects the toll, according to Tatad.

In February 1997, FPIDC entered into a joint venture agreement with the PNCC for the rehabilitation of the entire stretch of the North Luzon Expressway from Balintawak, Quezon City to Sta. Ines, Pampanga, according to Tatad.

Under the joint venture agreement, the parties would put up the Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC) with an authorized capitalization of P10 million.

The equity participation was as follows: FPDIC, 70 percent; PNCC, 20 percent; and Egis Projects, a French consulting firm, 10 percent.

Tatad said the parties later agreed to raise the final equity funding to $144 million.

The parties divided the $144 million equity as follows: FPIDC, $100.8 million; PNCC, $28.8 million; and EGIS Projects, $14.4 million.

Tatad said that in December 2001, when President Macapagal was already in office, FPIDC offered to convert into equity the P600 million it had invested in the Tipo-Subic tollway.

"The figure was first rounded off to P1 billion and written in US dollars ($51.1)," Tatad said.

Tatad said the amount was then assigned an interest rate of 22 to 25 percent per year and compounded monthly "at a time when the prevailing dollar interest rate was about 6 percent."

"This highly creative pencil-pushing gave FPIDC a net equity contribution of $126 million, or P7 billion, without putting in a single centavo," Tatad said.

Tatad said that PNCC could only raise $3 million and because of this, the PNCC's 20 percent share in the MNTC was whittled down to 2.5 percent.

Tatad said that as a result, the FPIDC's share rose to 87.5 percent, while Egis maintained its 10 percent equity share.

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Meralco wants refund paid off by yearend

By Abigail L. Ho

THE MANILA Electric Co. is looking to the end of the year or early 2005 to implement the fourth and final phase of its P30-billion refund to customers for overcharges.

Meralco refund task force chief Leonardo Mabale said in a telephone interview yesterday that while the firm was consulting with various business groups on the mode of the refund, the power distributor would have to file its recommendation soon with the Energy Regulatory Commission.

According to the draft proposal Meralco showed members of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry recently, large electricity users could either have their refunds credited to future bills or, if they exceed a certain volume, get the refunds in the form of financial instruments.

The instruments the power firm is reportedly eyeing are zero-coupon bonds dubbed as "refund notes."

Instead of the bonds, however, the PCCI suggested that part of the P18.6-billion Phase 4 refund be converted to equity shares for qualified electricity users.

"Our finance people are still determining the feasibility of the equity option. We've talked with various sectors about this option, but we still need to iron out some investment concerns, particularly those of our current shareholders with regard to the dilution of shares," Mabale said.

GMA unfazed by NPC defections

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Despite the defection of 73 members of the Nationalist People's Coalition, including Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Maranon, to her chief rival's camp, supporters of President Macapagal-Arroyo are optimistic about getting a large share of the votes in the province.

"The President seems to be more confident than what we expected," said Rafael Coscolluela, presidential adviser on cooperatives and former Negros Occidental governor. "She said to just go ahead and keep campaigning, and don't let it (the withdrawal of support) be a problem," he added.

The NPC leaders, who had joined the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, earlier complained that they were being treated as "second-class citizens" within the coalition.

Campaign spokesperson Mike Defensor, however, said they were not worried because they had the support of the people of Negros Occidental. But they were still hoping to bring back these NPC members to the fold, he said.

The President's perceived edge in Cebu, another vote-rich province, however, was dismissed by Sen. Sergio Osmeña III who chided those who said opposition standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr. had no major supporters in the province.

"Slowly but surely, Poe is inching his way to GMA's lead," he said in a statement. "From a ratio of 6 to 1 last January in favor of the President, the ratio is now 2 to 1 in the recent survey commissioned by an independent group."

Ignacio Arroyo Jr., the President's brother-in-law and a congressional candidate for the fifth district, could not explain Maranon's decision to bolt their camp.

"Maybe he is following orders, I really don't know. But if he follows his conscience I don't see how you can support a sixth grader for the presidency," Arroyo said, referring to Poe Jr., a high-school dropout.

Franklin Fuentebella of the Kaibigan ni Gloria Macapagal movement said Negros Occidental is still for the President. "I am confident the President will win by a big margin in Negros Occidental," he said, adding that a majority of the local officials were still with them.

Observers noted that these NPC members would not back Poe without the blessings of businessman Eduardo Cojuangco, NPC founding chair. Cojuangco, however, has not named his bet.

But Maranon said Cojuangco had nothing to do with their decision to bolt from the Lakas-CMD.

Defensor said he believed Cojuangco was supporting Ms Macapagal, and was merely giving more leeway for NPC leaders to choose their bets.

An indication, Defensor said, is the fact that his two sons—Representatives Carlos Cojuangco of Negros Occidental and Mark Cojuangco of Pangasinan—are supporters of the President.

Osmeña had openly declared his support for Poe earlier, first before some 400 local leaders at the home of Cebu City Mayor Tommy Osmeña, and also at the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino sorties in Toledo and Talisay towns.

He said Poe would bring to Malacañang an untarnished record, sincerity and political will "very much wanting" in the present government.

"Filipinos would rather have Susan Roces as first lady than six more years of Jose Pidal," he added, referring to First Gentleman Mike Arroyo.

John O son seeks speedy probe of drug raps

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Vice Gov. John Henry Gregory Osmeña yesterday went to the National Bureau of Investigation to clear his name in connection with an illegal shipment of 60 drums of pseudoephedrine, a regulated chemical used in the manufacture of shabu.

He asked NBI acting regional director Reynaldo Esmeralda to speed up the investigation and pledged his full cooperation although, he said, there was no evidence directly linking him to last week's shipment.

With Osmeña, who is now running for governor, were his lawyer Edgar Gica, his mother Lucy Urgello, and his running mate, lawyer Adelino Sitoy.

Urgello, who had rushed to her son's side from the United States, told reporters she would discuss the problem with her former husband, Sen. John "Sonny" Osmena.

"As much as I want to avoid trial by publicity," the young Osmeña said, "I ask authorities to expedite resolution... to allow me to move on."

Gica asked for authenticated copies of documents that allegedly showed the participation of Osmeña's staff members in the shipment.

The lawyer gave the NBI a copy of the 1999 articles of incorporation of Coastside Ventures Inc., shipment consignee. He said this proved that none of the vice governor's staff members who were implicated—Joebert Cuesta, Rorelie Villegas, and Rowena Tulda—was with the company.

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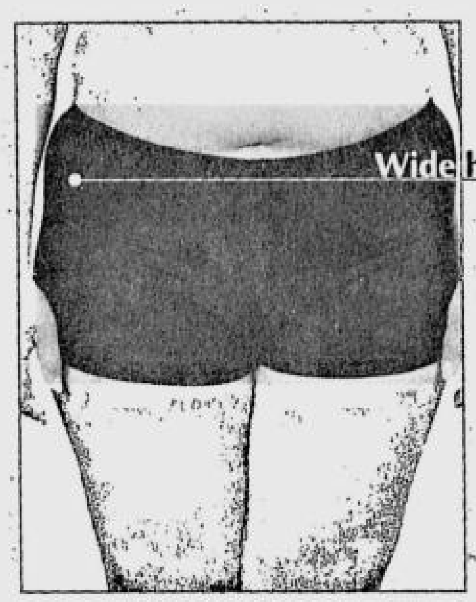

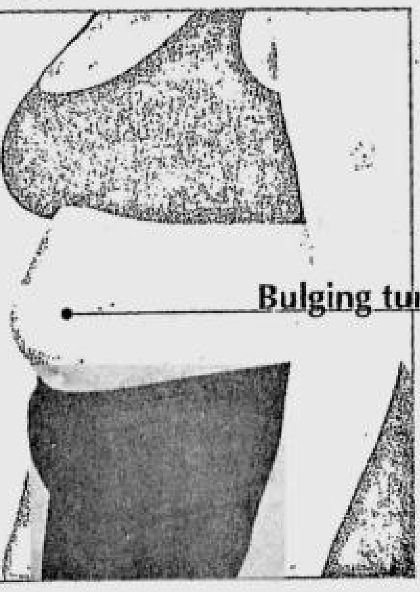

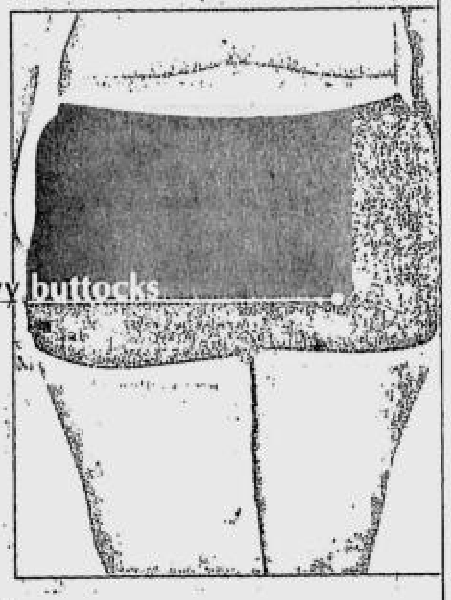

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DPWH exec with P81M in assets faces graft raps

By Armand N. Nocum

OMBUDSMAN Simeon Marcelo has recommended the filing of graft charges against suspended public works Regional Director Romeo Panganiban for allegedly accumulating more than P81 million in unexplained wealth during his 37 years in government service.

According to Marcelo, additional charges of "forfeiture of unlawfully acquired properties" will also be filed against Panganiban, his wife Fe, daughter Gerraldine, sisters Elsa and Purita, and brothers-in-law Ricardo Obligacion, Eddie Opulencia and Romeo de la Virgen.

Panganiban, who was reported to have close ties with disgraced President Joseph Estrada who himself is facing a plunder case, was the first official to be charged in the Sandiganbayan for failing the lifestyle check put in place by the government last year. The public works regional director was suspended for six months in 2003 for this.

So far, the Lifestyle Check Coalition has filed graft charges against more than 14 officials from the Department of Public Works and Highways, the Bureau of Customs and the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Marcelo told a recent interview with the INQUIRER that many of the cases involving flunkers of the lifestyle check will be submitted for resolution this month and in April.

The Ombudsman said in a statement that Panganiban will be charged with violating the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and the law on perjury under the Revised Penal Code.

Panganiban, whose annual salary amounted only P307,116, had declared a net worth of P14,110,000 in 2001, but graft investigators later found that his acquired real and personal properties were worth P81.7 million, many of which had been placed in the name of his immediate relatives.

Among his undeclared properties were a three-bedroom house in Los Angeles, California, worth P15 million; a residential house in Los Baños, Laguna, worth P2 million; a house in the posh Ayala, Alabang, worth P24.8 million; and a residential lot in Laguna worth P146,000.

The properties he had allegedly omitted from his 2001 statement of assets and liabilities amounted to P73,226,000.

Marcelo said it was obvious that "aside from undeclared assets, the acquisition alone of Panganiban's declared assets appear to be grossly disproportionate to his known income." The Ombudsman noted that the public works official's SAL had grown to P14,110,000 in 2001 from P455,000 in 1986.

Three years ago, Panganiban was reported to have been kidnapped and allegedly paid between P30 million and P50 million in ransom money to his captors. He was also criticized in the press for allegedly spending more than P30 million to refurbish the ancestral house of the Estradas in Laguna.

Fatter paychecks for gov't lawyers

PILI, Camarines Sur—Government lawyers may soon receive fatter paychecks.

President Macapagal-Arroyo signed yesterday RA 2709 granting an increase in pay of all government prosecutors, state counsels, undersecretaries and assistant secretaries in the form of special allowances not to exceed 100 percent of their salaries.

Ms Macapagal announced the good news amid cheers and a standing ovation from some 1,300 government prosecutors at the 16th annual national convention of the Prosecutors League of the Philippines here.

The new law intends to raise the level of competence of legal staff and other positions in the justice department, and to improve the compensation system for government lawyers to attract "the best and brightest" to the service.

The President praised the prosecutors as among the best legal minds in the government and as strong pillars of the justice system.

The implementation of the monthly pay of government prosecutors under the scheme was made as an advance implementation of "salary standardization III" which Congress has yet to enact.

According to RA 2709, the funds for the additional pay shall be charged against the collections of the different branches of the justice department from any increase in fees or new fees.

The collections shall be deposited in a special trust fund that the secretary of justice shall exclusively administer for the benefit of members of the National Prosecution Service, Office of the Chief State Counsel, and other personnel of the Office of the Secretary of Justice.

The President said the increase in the compensation of government prosecutors and counsel was one aspect of the judicial reforms worked out under her administration in a short period of time. The other involves adjustments in the judges' pay and the package of institutional strengthening funded by the World Bank. *Juan Escandor, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Search on for more Ate Glows

DO you look like Ate Glow ... er, President Glo?

"Biyaheng Gloria," a 45-day caravan spearheaded by groups supporting President Macapagal-Arroyo, yesterday announced a search for GMA look-alikes that will be conducted at several destination points nationwide.

Spokesperson Robert Bastillo said the contest is open to all persons who look, speak and move like the President, "regardless of gender and age."

Cash prizes await the best impersonators. "Many pro-Gloria supporters have donated the (funds) to make the event more colorful," Bastillo said.

Movie star Nora Aunor, the first ascertained presidential facsimile, was the first to sign up for a campaign to gather three million signatures of support for the President via "Biyaheng Gloria."

The caravan began with tours of Basco, Batanes, and Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, last March 25.

Among the organizers are the Progressive Organization for Genuine Leadership, Outstanding Reform and Installment Action (PRO-GLORIA), composed of seafarers, coconut planters, overseas Filipino workers, youths, tricycle drivers, and laborers.

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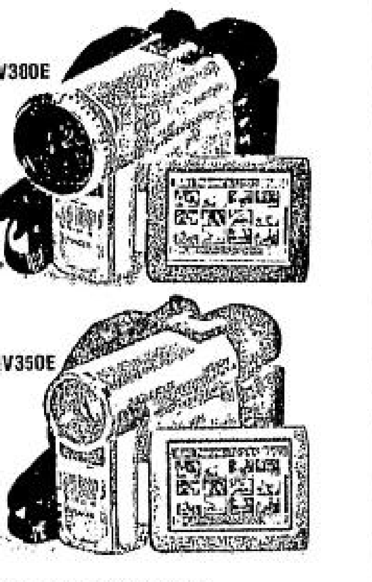

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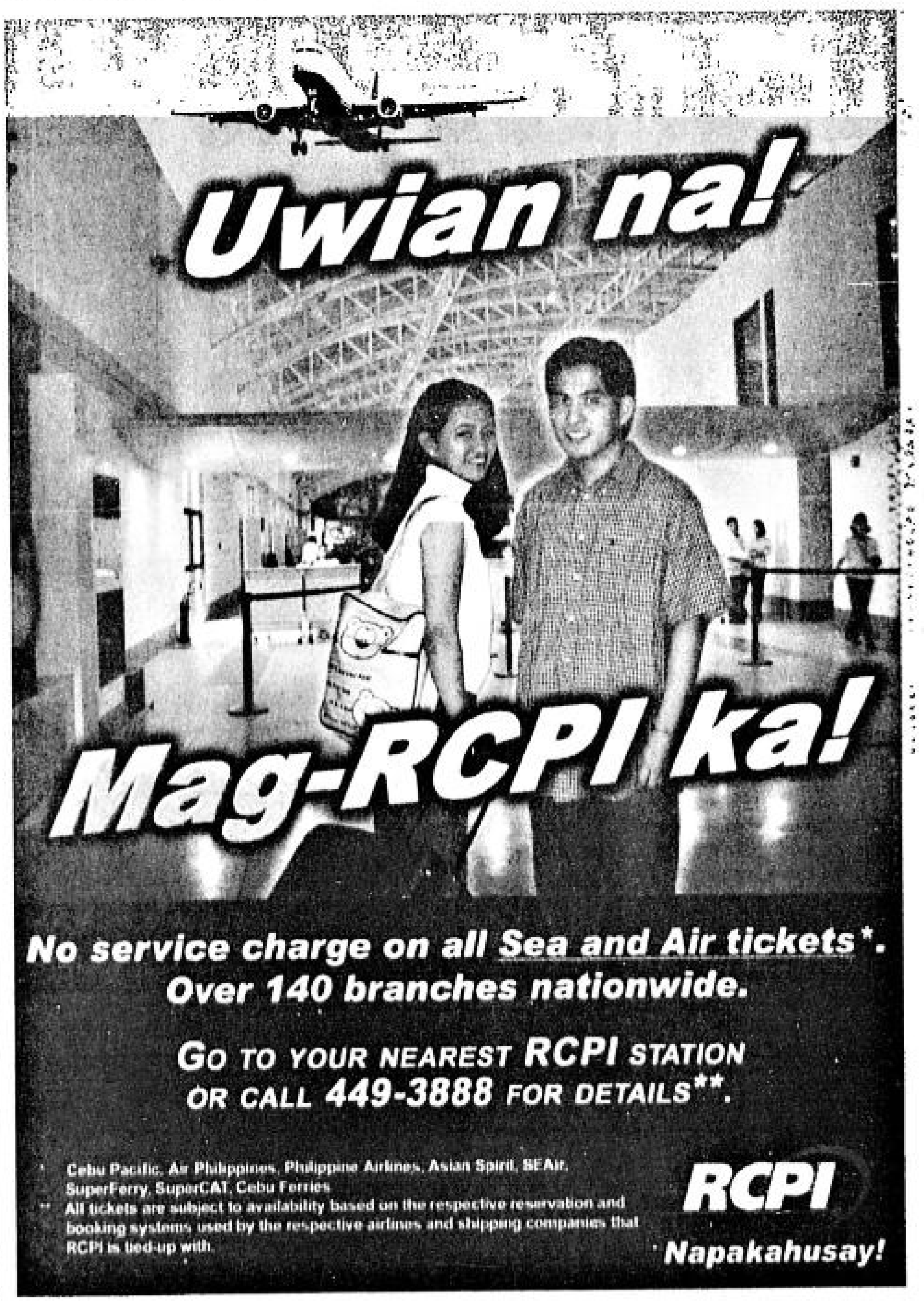
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Napakahusay!

DPWH exec with P81M in assets faces graft raps

By Armand N. Nocum

OMBUDSMAN Simeon Marcelo has recommended the filing of graft charges against suspended public works Regional Director Romeo Panganiban for allegedly accumulating more than P81 million in unexplained wealth during his 37 years in government service.

According to Marcelo, additional charges of "forfeiture of unlawfully acquired properties" will also be filed against Panganiban, his wife Fe, daughter Gerraldine, sisters Elsa and Purita, and brothers-in-law Ricardo Obligacion, Eddie Opulencia and Romeo de la Virgen.

Panganiban, who was reported to have close ties with disgraced President Joseph Estrada who himself is facing a plunder case, was the first official to be charged in the Sandiganbayan for failing the lifestyle check put in place by the government last year. The public works regional director was suspended for six months in 2003 for this.

So far, the Lifestyle Check Coalition has filed graft charges against more than 14 officials from the Department of Public Works and Highways, the Bureau of Customs and the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Marcelo told a recent interview with the INQUIRER that many of the cases involving flunkers of the lifestyle check will be submitted for resolution this month and in April.

The Ombudsman said in a statement that Panganiban will be charged with violating the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and the law on perjury under the Revised Penal Code.

Panganiban, whose annual salary amounted only P307,116, had declared a net worth of P14,110,000 in 2001, but graft investigators later found that his acquired real and personal properties were worth P81.7 million, many of which had been placed in the name of his immediate relatives.

Among his undeclared properties were a three-bedroom house in Los Angeles, California, worth P15 million; a residential house in Los Baños, Laguna, worth P2 million; a house in the posh Ayala, Alabang, worth P24.8 million; and a residential lot in Laguna worth P146,000.

The properties he had allegedly omitted from his 2001 statement of assets and liabilities amounted to P73,226,000.

Marcelo said it was obvious that "aside from undeclared assets, the acquisition alone of Panganiban's declared assets appear to be grossly disproportionate to his known income." The Ombudsman noted that the public works official's SAL had grown to P14,110,000 in 2001 from P455,000 in 1986.

Three years ago, Panganiban was reported to have been kidnapped and allegedly paid between P30 million and P50 million in ransom money to his captors. He was also criticized in the press for allegedly spending more than P30 million to refurbish the ancestral house of the Estradas in Laguna.

Fatter paychecks for gov't lawyers

PILI, Camarines Sur—Government lawyers may soon receive fatter paychecks.

President Macapagal-Arroyo signed yesterday RA 2709 granting an increase in pay of all government prosecutors, state counsels, undersecretaries and assistant secretaries in the form of special allowances not to exceed 100 percent of their salaries.

Ms Macapagal announced the good news amid cheers and a standing ovation from some 1,300 government prosecutors at the 16th annual national convention of the Prosecutors League of the Philippines here.

The new law intends to raise the level of competence of legal staff and other positions in the justice department, and to improve the compensation system for government lawyers to attract "the best and brightest" to the service.

The President praised the prosecutors as among the best legal minds in the government and as strong pillars of the justice system.

The implementation of the monthly pay of government prosecutors under the scheme was made as an advance implementation of "salary standardization III" which Congress has yet to enact.

According to RA 2709, the funds for the additional pay shall be charged against the collections of the different branches of the justice department from any increase in fees or new fees.

The collections shall be deposited in a special trust fund that the secretary of justice shall exclusively administer for the benefit of members of the National Prosecution Service, Office of the Chief State Counsel, and other personnel of the Office of the Secretary of Justice.

The President said the increase in the compensation of government prosecutors and counsel was one aspect of the judicial reforms worked out under her administration in a short period of time. The other involves adjustments in the judges' pay and the package of institutional strengthening funded by the World Bank. *Juan Escandor, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Search on for more Ate Glows

DO you look like Ate Glow ... er, President Glo?

"Biyaheng Gloria," a 45-day caravan spearheaded by groups supporting President Macapagal-Arroyo, yesterday announced a search for GMA look-alikes that will be conducted at several destination points nationwide.

Spokesperson Robert Bastillo said the contest is open to all persons who look, speak and move like the President, "regardless of gender and age."

Cash prizes await the best impersonators. "Many pro-Gloria supporters have donated the (funds) to make the event more colorful," Bastillo said.

Movie star Nora Aunor, the first ascertained presidential facsimile, was the first to sign up for a campaign to gather three million signatures of support for the President via "Biyaheng Gloria."

The caravan began with tours of Basco, Batanes, and Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, last March 25.

Among the organizers are the Progressive Organization for Genuine Leadership, Outstanding Reform and Installment Action (PRO-GLORIA), composed of seafarers, coconut planters, overseas Filipino workers, youths, tricycle drivers, and laborers.

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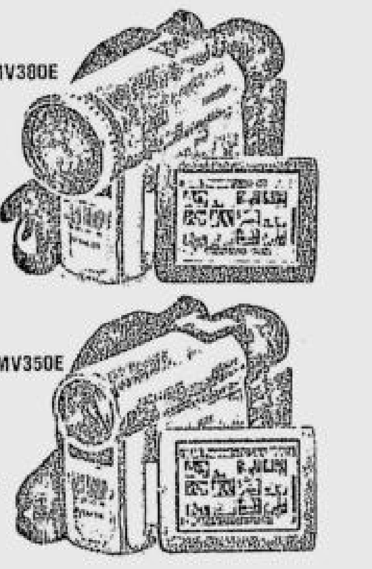

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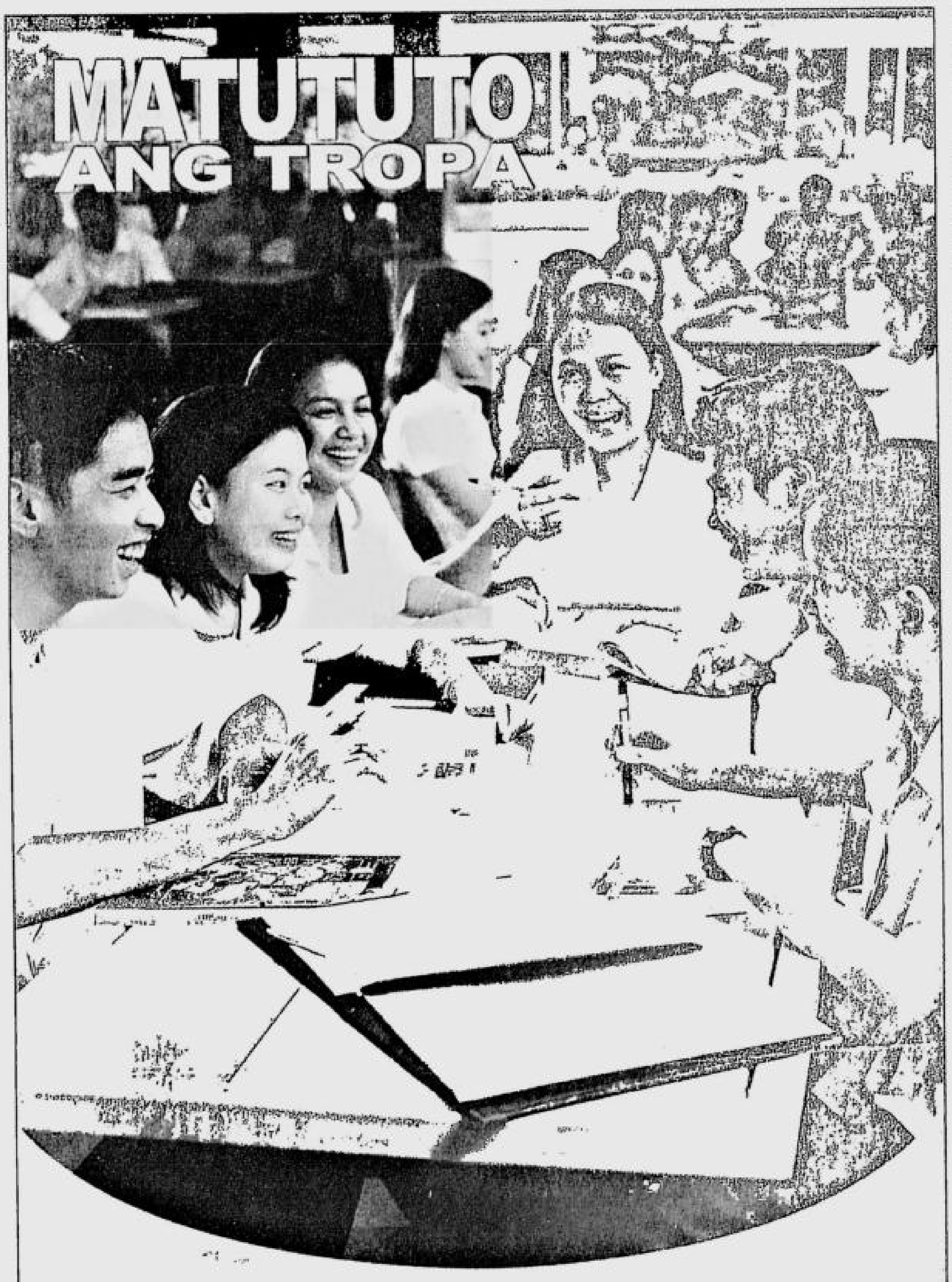

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Opening Ceremony: The Roxas family

CII President - Angela de Villa Lacson and Project Team

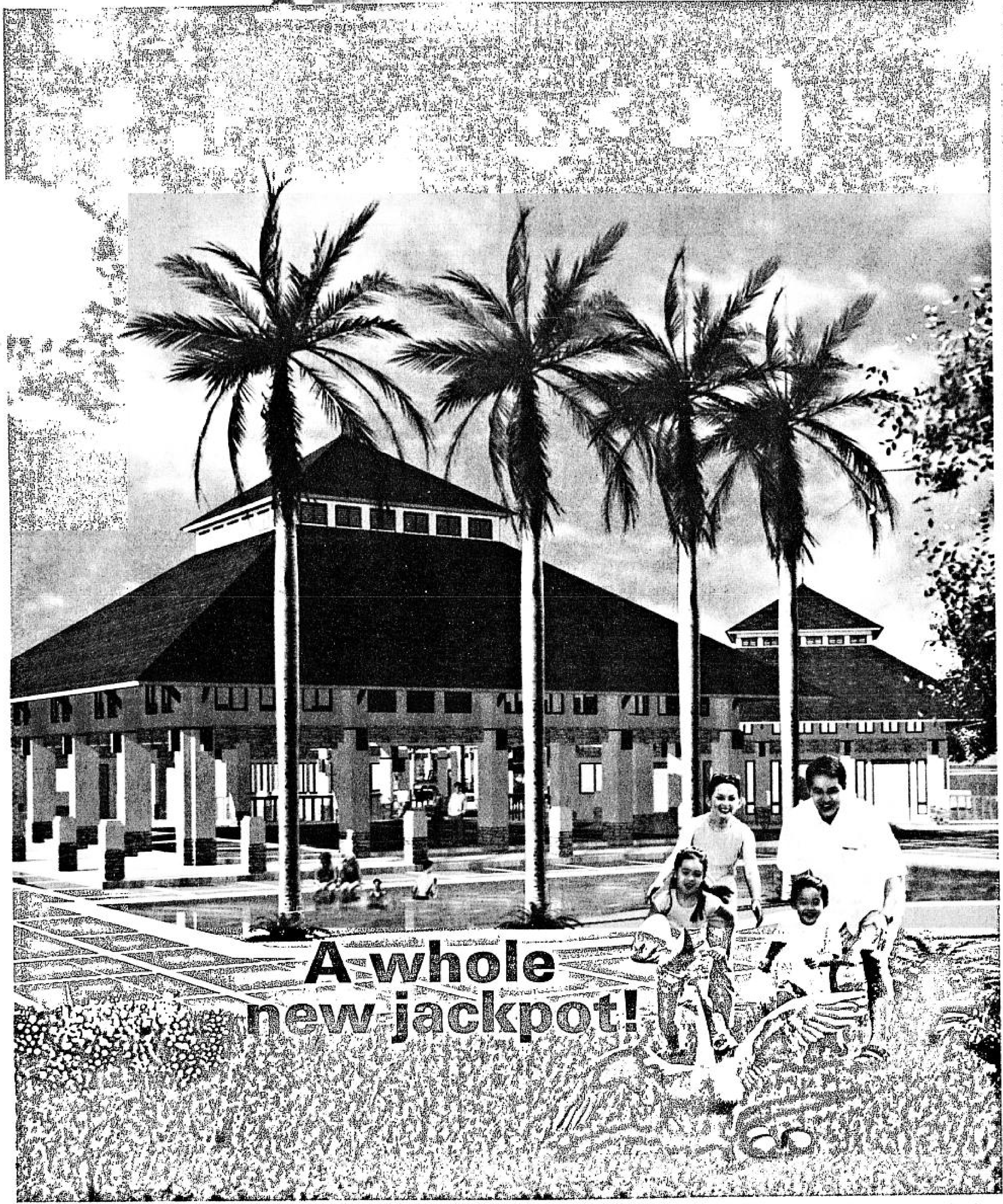
People behind CII

Clients viewing the 2-hectare Central Park scale model

CII Sales and client

A new residential community now provides the perfect spot for young urban professionals to raise their families and live their ideal lifestyle. Verdana Homes Mamplasan in Biñan, Laguna, recently opened its doors during the launch ceremony conducted by Community Innovations, Inc. (CII), an Ayala company that designed and developed the project. Held at the Alabang Town Center, the launch event treated the audience to a mini presentation on the advantages of having Verdana Homes' multiple amenities in its 2-hectare central park, 24-hour security, luxurious Asian-Balinese design, and proximity to the Ayala South, the rising hub of commercial, industrial, recreational, and educational institutions in the south. To give the audience an initial taste of the Verdana Homes lifestyle, CII also invited them for side activities such as a Henna Tattoo session, figurine painting, on - the - spot massage and yoga demonstrations.

For more information, call hotline numbers 750-0484, 750-0471, 849,0551 or visit its website at www.communityinnovations.com.ph; or e-mail cii-sale@ayaland.com.ph.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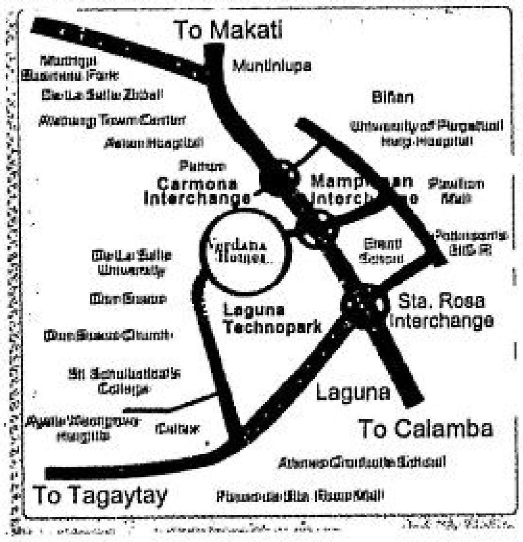
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To Calamba
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The new Verdana Homes Mamplasan will get you all excited! It's the first community in the country to feature amenities done in exotic Asian Balinese architecture. 2.2 hectares of parks and recreation areas, including a grand clubhouse, pools, a basketball court, jogging paths, covered badminton courts. Even a kids' area complete with biking and skating trails. And with flexible payment schemes starting at P11,100 a month, Verdana Homes Mamplasan is the ideal first home for young urban achievers. Come, take a gander at it.

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ADVT

With RP cops' help, Aussies foil $244-M drug smuggling

SYDNEY—Australian and Philippine police have arrested five people and seized a record quantity of a drugs used to make amphetamines following a joint six-month investigation, officials said Tuesday.

Five Australian residents were detained on Queensland's Gold Coast and charged in connection with an alleged bid to smuggle 1.5 tons of pseudoephedrine, a key ingredient in the manufacture of amphetamines, into Australia, Justice and Customs Minister Chris Ellison said.

Pseudoephedrine is a decongestant, most commonly prescribed to treat colds and sinus congestion, but in significant quantities can be used to make speed.

The arrests and the seizure of the 1.5-ton batch in the Philippines was the result of a six-month joint investigation by Australian and Philippine police and drug enforcement agencies, Ellison said in a statement.

The haul netted enough psuedoephedrine to make 1.3 tons of amphetamines with a potential street value of 325 million dollars ($244 million US), he said.

Australian police alleged the drugs were shipped from China to the Philippines from where they were to be flown by light aircraft to eastern Australia in three 500-kg batches. AFP

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Paracetamol tab 500 mg	✓ 0.60	2.45	1.85/tab
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Amoxicillin cap. 250 mg	✓ 2.60	8.95	6.35/cap
Amoxicillin cap. 500 mg	✓ 3.70	15.75	12.05/cap
Amoxicillin susp. 250 mg/5 ml, 60 ml	✓ 45.10	144.00	98.90/bot
Ampicillin cap. 500 mg	✓ 6.50	14.15	7.65/cap
Chloramphenicol cap. 500 mg	✓ 3.20	37.75	34.55/cap
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Co-trimoxazole tab (TM-160mg SMZ-800mg)	✓ 2.30	26.00	23.70/tab
Co-trimoxazole cap. (TM-80mg SMZ-400mg)	✓ 2.10	14.80	12.70/cap
Co-trimoxazole susp. (TM-40mg SMZ-200mg)	✓ 25.40	115.75	90.35/bot
Anti-cough (Para sa Ubo)			
Bromhexine HCL syrup 4 mg/5 ml, 60 ml	✓ 25.40	74.75	49.35/bot
Carbocisteine cap. 500 mg	✓ 2.10	12.25	10.15/cap
Carbocisteine susp. 100 mg/5 ml, 60 ml	✓ 24.00	87.25	63.25/bot
Anti-diarrhea (Para sa Pagtatae)			
Loperamide cap. 2mg	✓ 1.10	10.25	9.15/cap

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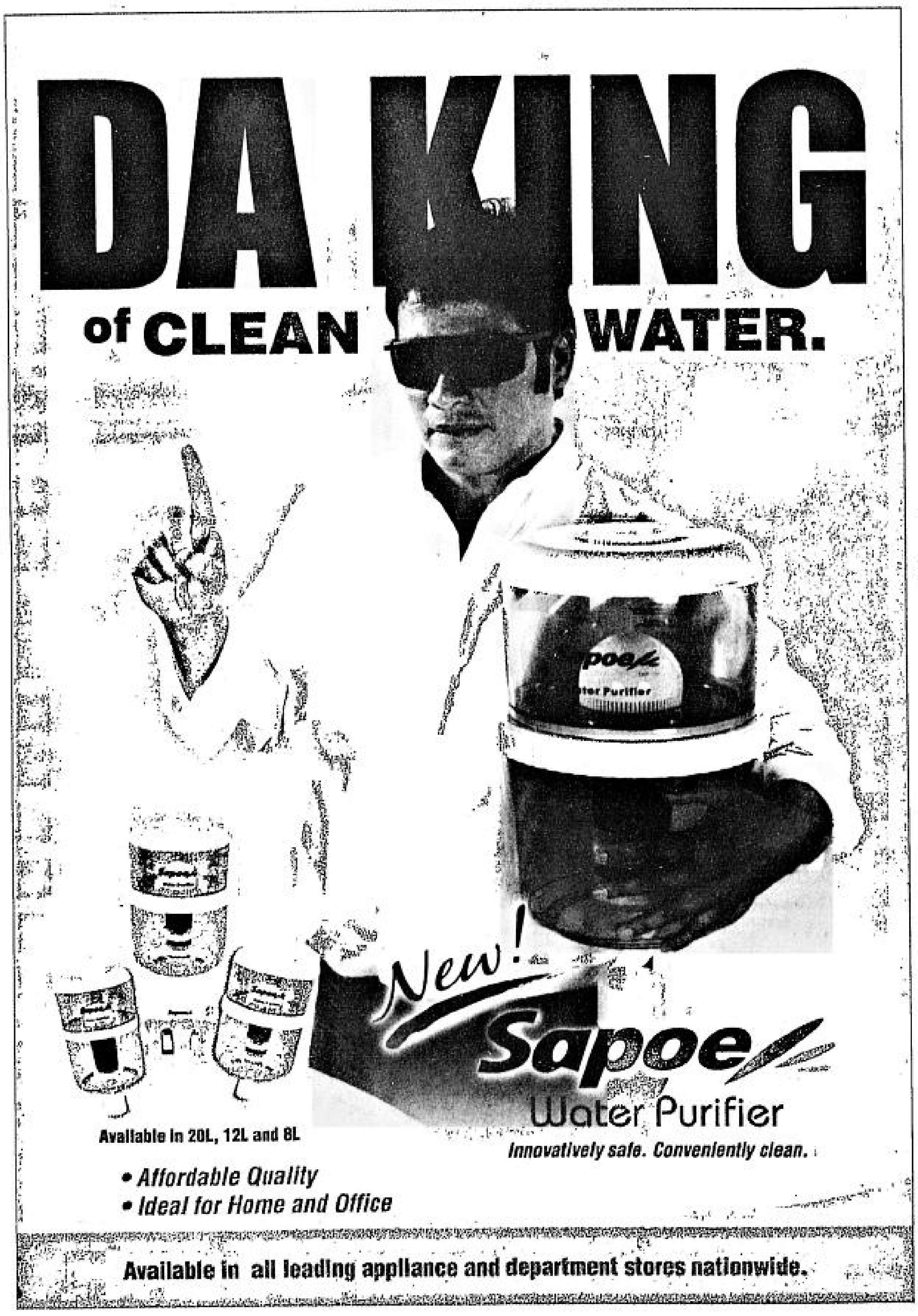
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Observers have high hopes for peace in South

By Rex G. Ortega, *PDI Mindanao Bureau*

CAMP BUSHRA, Butig, Lanao del Sur—Foreign observers of the ongoing peace talks between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front are confident that the process will be successful.

Brig. Gen. Dato Zulkifeli Bin Mohd Zain, head of the advance party of the Malaysian-led International Monitoring Team (IMT), was impressed with the cooperation among members of both panels in their pursuit of a just and lasting peace in Mindanao.

Malaysia is brokering the peace talks between the government and the MILF.

Zulkifeli and his team are on a 15-camp tour of the MILF's bases in Mindanao. They just wrapped up visits to four camps in Maguindanao and in Zamboanga. They were given a royal welcome here with hundreds of residents, including women and children, lining the roads chanting, "Allahu Akbar (God is Great)."

Standing out in the crowd of welcomers were neatly uniformed MILF guerrillas brandishing their best weapons—including rocket-propelled grenades.

A spokesperson for the MILF's 102nd Base estimated the crowd to number 90,000 and the armed MILF members to be about 15,000.

Benjie Midtimbang, head of the MILF's cease-fire team, said Zulkifeli's visit was a "good start in achieving lasting peace" in Mindanao.

AFP deputy chief Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia said: "We want peace not war. (The government and the MILF) should not fail our children for they have suffered long enough."

Alim Abdul Asis Mimbantas, MILF military chief, thanked the Malaysian Government "for facilitating and mediating the peace talks and for its wise guidance."

Hadji Abdullah Dalidig, chair of the Muslim Multi-Sectoral Movement for Peace and Development, said that Zulkifeli's pronouncements "are an assurance to all *bangsamoro* people that the peace process would truly succeed."

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said the arrival of the advance team from the IMT would also pave the way for the resumption of the much-awaited formal peace talks between the government and the MILF in a bid to end the long-running Moro secessionist struggle.

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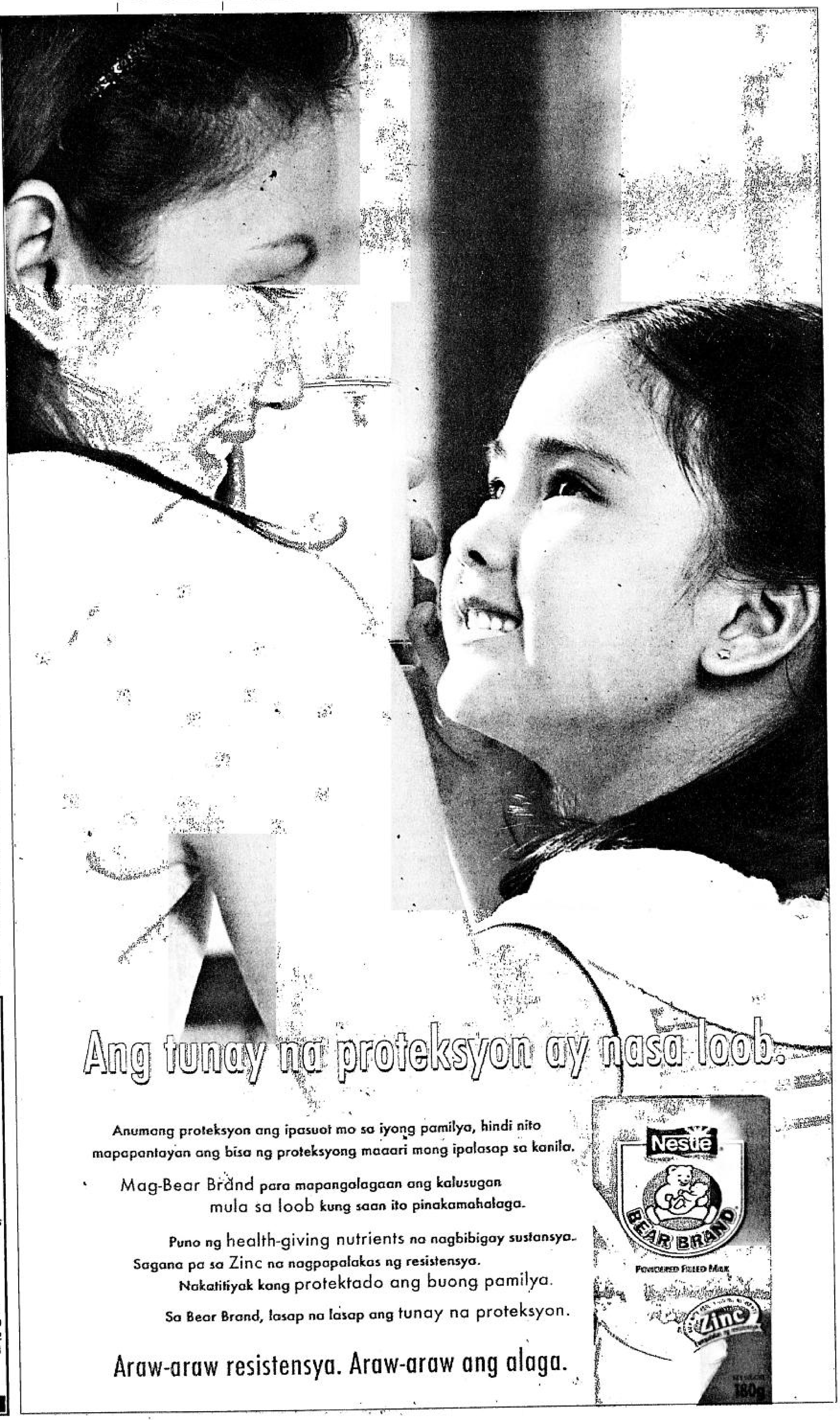
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Metro bomb plot foiled

From page A1

"This is intended for bombing malls and trains in Metro Manila," the President said of the explosives cache.

Most dangerous cell

"The most dangerous terrorist cell of the Abu Sayyaf has been dismantled."

Her statements appeared to be an admission that the Abu Sayyaf, the most violent Moro extremist group claiming to be fighting for an Islamic state in Mindanao and linked by intelligence agencies to al-Qaida, had finally arrived in Manila.

The 36 kilos of TNT was powerful enough to flatten a two-story structure with a floor area of about 60 square meters provided it was strategically placed, Central Luzon police director Chief Supt. Vidal Querol said.

"It could also rip through an average train coach, that's for sure," he told the INQUIRER.

Ms Macapagal said she was disclosing the plotters' supposed link to the SuperFerry incident against the advise of her national security officials.

"Let no one and no nation underestimate our determination to finish off the Abu Sayyaf, the JI (Jemaah Islamiya) and the al-Qaida cells in our country," she said.

The JI is a regional militant network said to be linked to al-Qaida and blamed for several bombings around Southeast Asia, including the Bali tourist resort attack in Indonesia, which killed more than 200 people.

Ms Macapagal announced the arrests after US President George W. Bush's Republican party admitted in Washington on Monday it had been lax in labeling Thailand and the Philippines as countries that harbor and aid terrorists.

The label had drawn protests from Manila and Bangkok.

Bloody hands

Philippine National Police intelligence chief Gen. Ismael Rafanan identified the four suspected terrorists as:

- Al-hamsed Manatad Limbong, alias Hassan, Sayyaf and Kosovo, said to be the second cousin of fugitive Abu Sayyaf leader Khadafy Janjalani and supposedly involved in the beheading of American tourist Guillermo Sobero in 2001. He was linked to the 2002 bombing in Malagutay, Zamboanga City, which killed an American soldier.
- Redendo Cain Dellosa, alias Hakid Akmal, who allegedly trained under an Indonesian Jemaah bomber.
- Abdusaid Lim, alias Abu Khalifa, a supposed urban commando involved in the 2001 kidnapping of 20 people, including the American missionary couple Martin and Grace Burnham, from the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan.
- Radsamar Sangkula, alias Michaeal Saavedra, an explosives trainer allegedly involved in the abduction of 53 people in Tumahubong, Basilan, in March 2000.

Only Limbong, alias Kosovo, carried a reward—P150,000—for his capture.

Campaigning in Pili, Camarines Sur, Ms Macapagal announced the price on Janjalani's head had been doubled to P10 million.

'Coddled by MILF'

Janjalani is hiding in Central Mindanao and is being protected by members of the JI, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya said.

Quoting intelligence reports, Abaya also said Janjalani was being coddled by the MILF's Special Operations Group and guarded by 50 to 60 armed men.

Janjalani escaped from Basilan, where he makes his base, at the height of the US-RP Balikatan war games in 2002 and moved to Jolo. Later, he fled to Central Mindanao.

Rafanan said the four suspects had standing arrest warrants for their alleged involvement in the Dos Palmas kidnappings besides being implicated in the abduction of 21 mostly foreign tourists from Sipadan island in Malaysia in 2000.

PNP intelligence director Robert Delfin said the suspects were planning an attack in Metro Manila similar in scale to the Madrid train bombings.

Police said Redendo was arrested in the first operation in Makati City, followed by the operation in Fairview, Quezon City where the 36 kg of TNT was seized from Kosovo, identified as the cell leader.

Before announcing the arrests, Ms Macapagal met briefly with Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Interior Secretary Jose Lina, National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, General Abaya, Philippine National Police chief Director General Hermogenes Ebdane and other members of the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security.

Lina declined to identify the targets, saying he did not want to unduly alarm the public.

The arrests were the first major strike of the elite counter-terrorism task force Ms Macapagal recently organized.

She said the four terrorists were arrested and held without bail on a warrant issued by Judge Lindo Uy of Pasig City.

'Murderers'

She said the government had witnesses against "these murderers and the cases against them are strong and air-tight. Follow-up operations are ongoing; they would be relentless."

"Our nation is safer now but we must never relax our vigilance," she said.

Commending the security teams which made the arrests, Ms Macapagal said: "This reflects the best of Philippine intelligence working in fusion with American and foreign allies."

Asked to explain what damage 36 kg of TNT could do, Ermita said: "Oh my gosh, they claim that five pounds of TNT ... can cause casualties to hundreds of people. What more 36 kilos or 80 pounds, especially if placed in a crowded place. You can imagine the people that will be (harmed)."

He said the explosives could be placed in the LRT or MRT trains or in places where people gather.

Ermita said authorities were still on their toes to prevent any attack in Metro Manila and other places.

Holy Week alert

"Remember there is a forthcoming election, remember even forces other than the Abu Sayyaf could very well create trouble toward the holidays, during Holy Week. That's why all armed forces and the PNP are geared toward identifying and neutralizing them," Ermita said.

Abaya said about 400 Abu Sayyaf members were still on the prowl in Mindanao and other parts of the country.

Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza, AFP commander for the National Capital Region, said the military was on alert for possible terrorist attacks in Metro Manila.

Braganza said the military intended to expand the security cover to include private guards of subdivisions and residential villages.

He added that the military would also be conducting training seminars for security guards on terrorism. *With a report from Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Exec notes undue haste in Maynilad bailout deal

From page A1

es to do so in behalf of the people?" the official said.

He said that fears about a disruption of water service were unfounded because the MWSS had a contingency plan prepared two years ago should it have to take over Maynilad's operations.

Deferred expenses

The official noted that two years ago, the MWSS Regulatory Office did not recognize about P8 billion of Maynilad's assets when the utility applied for a rate increase because these were considered deferred expenses.

In the evaluation of the reorganization plan he submitted to the MWSS on March 16, former National Economic and Development Authority chief Felipe Medalla said Maynilad's deferred expenses reached "at least P11.5 billion."

He said the most recent audited balance sheet available, that of Dec. 31, 2002, showed that the value of Maynilad's total assets was P21.2 billion.

Of the total amount, "concession assets" accounted for P8 billion while "other non-current assets" were worth P7.8 billion.

Of the P8 billion in concession assets, P7.9 billion was described in the audited financial statements as "concession fee (that) pertains to the fees paid and payable by (Maynilad) to MWSS up to Dec. 31, 2002," Medalla said.

Of the P7.8 billion non-current assets, P3.7 billion was described as "capitalized excess of costs and expenses over revenues," he added. "In other words, at least P11.5 billion of the total assets are deferred expenses or losses."

He said that if Maynilad were a going concern, "he could conceivably argue that unrecovered payments of concession fees by the concessionaire (or liabilities it incurred because of them) are concession assets which are paid for by the consumers over the life of the concession."

"But to claim that such is the case, the company must operate for 25 years as stipulated in the concession agreement," Medalla added.

The INQUIRER source said the MWSS board deliberations about the Maynilad issue were conducted in "executive session" since last year.

"Yet, Malacañang is saying that the negotiations were transparent. If they were transparent, then they should reveal the details of these meetings," the official said.

He said that when the MWSS board met two weeks ago, Teehankee had to talk to the board members individually outside the board room until he got a consensus to approve the agreement.

3 opposed deal

He said that of the nine board members, three opposed the deal. They were Finance Undersecretary Ma. Teresa Habitan, Lorenzo Sulaik and Alfredo Reyes.

The others—MWSS Administrator Orlando Hondrade, Amaury Gutierrez, Jay de Castro, Andoni Dumlao and Elpidio Vega—accepted the deal. Public Works Secretary Florante Soriquez, the board chair, was not present but he later signed the board resolution approving the deal, the source said.

Open to suggestions

The source said government lawyers should not have immediately presented the deal to the Quezon City Regional Trial Court, which is hearing Maynilad's rehabilitation petition, because the MWSS board approved the deal on condition that the Department of Finance and Neda endorsed it first.

But in an interview yesterday, Teehankee said the two government agencies were already reviewing the deal and were open to recommendations on how it could be improved.

He pointed out that it was Maynilad that informed the court that there was already a settlement.

Teehankee declined to dignify the allegation that he had to talk individually to the MWSS board members to convince them to approve the agreement, saying that these were ad hominen attacks and that what the government needed now were "constructive" suggestions.

On the auditing of Maynilad assets, Teehankee said that in "very complex financial deals" the parties initially relied on the "goodwill" of those involved.

He then added that in the Maynilad case, the creditor banks would surely want an independent audit of Maynilad's books apart from the review conducted by the MWSS auditor, Sycip, Gorres and Velayo (SGV).

Teehankee said the government and the Quezon City court were gathering all suggestions for and objections to the plan to improve it.

Squabbles

Former Maynilad president Rafael Alunan III has dismissed insinuations that mismanagement led to Maynilad's current financial woes.

He instead blamed government squabbles and its "populism" for the Maynilad mess.

"The one thing that can be said about Maynilad's tragedy is that it is, in fact, a costly lesson to investors and lenders here and abroad that the government is not equipped to implement its privatization policy and nurture public business," Alunan said in a memo dated March 24.

He said that the compromise settlement between Maynilad and the government was the "best that could be had from a no-win situation."

"It marks the end of a shocking ordeal that began with a genuine desire by the Lopez family to help the government improve the Filipinos' quality of life, but which ended in tremendous financial losses for the Lopez group and unwarranted attacks on their personal and corporate reputations," he said.

"Maynilad's experience is only one example in the long trail of unhappiness of doing business in the Philippines brought about by government's unreliability as governor, regulator and development partner. No wonder the Philippines is at the bottom of the investments ladder in the region."

Anti-privatization

Alunan said anti-privatization elements within MWSS, who allegedly wanted to regain control of procurement, "monkey wrenched" efforts to save the concession while anti-privatization non-governmental organizations accused Maynilad of trying to extort higher water rates from the MWSS.

"The charges are incorrect that Maynilad has mismanaged the concession or that it has cheated the government and the people. Quite simply, it is the other way around: the MWSS has mismanaged privatization and is trying to divert attention from its glaring failures by casting blame on Maynilad," he said.

Alunan said MWSS officials ignored written warnings Maynilad had sent as early as September and October 2000 to avert the concession's collapse.

"MWSS' breaches of its contractual obligations, the squabbles within the government, and government's populism eventually resulted in the mess that Maynilad had repeatedly forewarned about," he said.

To disprove accusations of mismanagement, Alunan pointed out that Maynilad was able to increase its service coverage from 63 percent to 85 percent.

He said total service connections increased from 391,000 to 586,000. And of the 194,000 new connections installed, around 75,000 were in urban poor areas. He said this benefited some 700,000 people living in slum areas.

Alunan also disputed insinuations that the settlement was a "bailout" or a "sweetheart" deal. He said Benpres Holdings, the holding firm of the Lopezes, would lose its control of Maynilad and its "entire paid-in capital and advances" worth P3.4 billion.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, March 31, 2004
5th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Dn 3:14-20, 91-92, 95
Gospel: Jn 8:31-42

Jesus went on to say to the Jews who believed in him: "You will be my true disciples if you keep my word. Then you will know the truth and the truth will make you free." They answered him, "We are the descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves of anyone. What do you mean by saying: You will be free?"

Jesus answered them, "Truly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave. But the slave doesn't stay in the house forever; the son stays forever. So, if the Son makes you free, you will be really free.

"I know that you are the descendants of Abraham; yet you want to kill me because my word finds no place in you. For my part I speak of what I have seen in the Father's presence, but you do what you have learned from your father."

They answered him, "Our father is Abraham." Then Jesus said, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do as Abraham did. But now you want to kill me, the one who tells you the truth—the truth that I have learned from God. That is not what Abraham did; what you are doing are the works of your father."

The Jews said to him, "We are not illegitimate children; we have one Father, God." Jesus replied, "If God were your Father you would love me, for I came forth from God, and I am here. And I didn't come by my own decision, but it was he himself who sent me."

Commentary

"The truth will make you free" is hard medicine. We would all prefer to be free by an easier method: by escaping the harder realities. We escape out of ourselves or into ourselves, according to temperament. We have multiplied and varied the means of escape in the modern world: many of our technical advances are means of escaping not only from the past but also from the present. However, in psychotherapy we know that healing depends on a return to the truth of ourselves.

Here is a good rule: the answer is in the question, the solution is in the problem. It is not by escaping a question that we come to the answer, but by going deeply into it; it is not by escaping a problem that we solve it, but by staying with it. If I have one problem and I am upset by that fact, then I have two problems! If I begin to run away from it, I have three! While I am running I will be unhappy and frightened and I will certainly cause many further problems for myself and for others. Better to return to having just one. By staying with it—and not forcing a solution—there will be a shift, the solution will be there. Then we will know for ourselves that it is only the truth that sets us free.

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Neo-Nazi admits bombings after watching 'The Passion'

From page A1

19-year-old woman who was pregnant with his child.

Johnny Olsen, 41, went to Oslo police after watching the movie about the death of Christ to admit that he was behind the previously unexplained bombings against anarchist squatters in the city in the mid-1990s.

"The trigger that made him go to police and confess was that movie," his lawyer, Fridtjof Feydt, said. He added his client had long been concerned with issues such as reconciliation and redemption.

The weekend confession prompted police to charge Olsen with arson. No one died in the bombings in 1994 and 1995 during a wave of street fights between neo-Nazis and anarchists.

US killing

"This does not change my view of the film in the slightest," Oslo's Lutheran Bishop Gunnar Staalsett told the Norwegian daily Verdens Gang, reiterating his condemnation of the movie as glorifying sadism and torture.

Dan R. Leach, on the other hand, said that watching the film, along with the discussion with a family friend, led him to walk into the Fort Bend County (Texas) sheriff's department earlier this month and confess to killing Ashley Nicole Wilson according to Detective Mike Kubricht.

A coroner had ruled her death by hanging a suicide.

Wilson's body was discovered Jan. 19 in her apartment near Richmond, southwest of Houston. All physical evidence pointed to suicide, Kubricht said, and the 19-year-old had gone off anti-depressant medications because she was pregnant.

The pregnancy apparently was the motive, Kubricht said, because Leach believed he was responsible and did not want to raise a child.

Leach, 21, who faces a life term in prison if convicted, wore gloves and left none of his own DNA behind, Kubricht said. "He was very, very meticulous. It was very well-planned and well executed."

Filipino Christians

Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales has urged Christians in the country to watch "The Passion," calling it a film of genuine artistic and religious value.

"Try to see it in an atmosphere of quiet and prayerful reflection, instead of seeking to be merely entertained," he said in a pastoral letter.

But he said children under high school age should not watch it because of its "very great violence," and also said Jews should not be blamed for Christ's death.

Jewish groups say the film could foment anti-Semitic attacks because of its graphic depiction of the crucifixion. Israel's chief rabbi has urged Pope John Paul II to speak out against it.

The film has topped the box office since its release four weeks ago in the United States.

At the Greenbelt 3 Cinema in Makati City, tickets were sold out at two of the five theaters and were nearly sold out at the three others where the film will be screened today, a receptionist said.

But theater proceeds are bound to be badly hurt by pirated copies. In Manila's back streets, the movie has been on sale for a week for less than P100 (about $1.50). *Reuters, AP*

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (EVIDENCE)—Credibility of witness; rape victim—The settled rule is that when the issue involves the credibility of a witness, the trial court's assessment is entitled to great weight, even finality, unless it is shown that it was tainted with arbitrariness or there was an oversight of some fact or circumstance of weight and influence. The reason is obvious—the trial court has the unique opportunity to observe the witness firsthand and note his or her demeanor and manner of testifying. The trial court found Jonalyn a credible witness and appreciated her clear and convincing testimony on how the rapes were committed. From the foregoing candid, categorical and straightforward sob-punctuated narration by Jonalyn of the incidents, it is not difficult to believe that indeed the young girl who had just metamorphosed into a teenager was twice ravished by her father who was looked upon with fear as "he always hurt [her]" as well as her 9 siblings and their mother by boxing and kicking them. [Citations omitted.] [En Banc, Per Curiam, People vs Madera, G. R. Nos. 138662-63, November 4, 2003]

BY R. B. VERA

Erap offers to lease villa to gov't for P1 a year

From page A1

in offering his vacation estate in Tanay, Rizal, for lease by the government.

The offer, contained in a letter sent to the Sandiganbayan on March 29, was yet another of ousted President Joseph Estrada's attempts to get the anti-graft court—which is hearing his trial on plunder and graft charges—to grant him house arrest in the estate across from Camp Capinpin, where he is detained.

And he threw in a come-on: "The property may be forfeited in favor of the government should I escape from confinement," he said in his letter.

But the government is not biting.

"This is not legally possible," Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said.

Estrada, 66, who had been complaining of the heat in his low-ceiling, modestly furnished detention quarters at Capinpin, wrote the letter in support of his lawyers' "motion to modify the custodial arrangement."

He offered to put his vacation estate "under the control and supervision of the court and the Philippine National Police for the duration of my detention.

"I am also amenable to a one-peso-a-year lease arrangement with the government so that the court and the PNP may have jurisdictional control and supervision over my property while I am in detention," he said.

The property will serve as a "guarantee and/or bond to ensure that I will not escape from the custody of the court," he added.

But Villa-Ignacio said the newly refurbished estate, which has a swimming pool and a Mediterranean-style villa, would have to be declared "ill-gotten" for the state to impose a takeover.

Earlier, Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Minita Chico-Nazario and Villa-Ignacio suggested that Estrada donate his property to the government to remove the legal impediments to the government's sequestration of a private property.

Nazario also said at a hearing last week that in putting Estrada's property under its control, the court would "unduly expand" its jurisdiction.

But ex-Justice Manuel Pamaran, one of Estrada's court-appointed lawyers, shot down Nazario's suggestion that the estate be donated to the government.

"That amounts to blackmailing the accused Estrada to give something to gain something from this government," Pamaran said, adding that the matter could also be viewed as a form of "bribery."

List of infamy

The London-based Transparency International said in its 2004 Global Corruption Report that Estrada pocketed $70-80 million in the three years that he was President.

Estrada, who has admitted to spending time in his estate without the express approval of the Sandiganbayan, protested his inclusion in the rogue list and threatened to sue the corruption watchdog.

Indonesia's Suharto ranked first on the list, with the alleged theft of $15-35 billion. Some of the others listed were the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos, Haiti's Jean-Claude Duvalier and Peru's Alberto Fujimori.

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Jeepney fare hike fails . . .

From page A1

'AFP LIBRENG SAKAY'

A SOLDIER calls on commuters in Masinag, Antipolo City, to get on an AFP truck deployed to ferry commuters stranded during the strike.

ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

non-striking drivers in Angono and Binangonan towns in Rizal, and spikes were scattered on the national highway in Misamis Oriental to force public utility vehicles to stop plying their routes.

Members of the Pinag-isang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Operators Nationwide (Piston) pushed through with the protest despite the fare increase. The minimum fare is still P4 but this only applies to the first 4 km.

"They did not give anything, not a single centavo. They just imposed a rollback in fares," said Piston president Mar Garvida. He explained that his group had long been implementing the P1 increase for the first 4 km.

Tricked

Garvida said the transport groups that backed out of the nationwide strike "were not aware they were tricked."

Piston had initially planned a two-day strike until today, but Garvida said his group would no longer continue the protest. "What we did yesterday was enough to convey our message to the government," he said.

Piston is demanding a P1 fare increase and a reduction in fuel prices. The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) is hearing a two-year-old petition by jeepney groups for a P1.50 fare increase.

Waldy Santos, spokesperson of Piston in Pampanga, said the strike pushed through because the 75-centavo increase was a "farce."

Santos said the increase applied only to jeepneys plying 5-km routes. He said many drivers would not benefit from it because those servicing 4-km routes or even shorter distances could not charge the new fare.

The increase, Santos noted, was also intended to divide the drivers.

Leaders of two transport organizations that did not join the strike said they would continue to fight for the P1.50 increase.

Efren de Luna and Zenaida Maranan, presidents of Philippine Confederation of Drivers Organization-Alliance of Concerned Transportation Operators (PCDO-Acto) and Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association of the Philippines (Fedjodap) respectively, said the new rate was just a bridge measure while their petitions were being heard.

De Luna and Maranan's groups, along with three others—National Transport Workers Union (NTU), Makati Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association and Alliance of Transport Operators and Drivers Association—decided to call off their plan to join yesterday's strike after a three-hour meeting on Monday with Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza, Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo and LTFRB Chair Ma. Elena Bautista in Malacañang.

Change of mind

Later in the day, the NTU officials had a change of mind and decided to push through with the strike. NTU spokesperson Brent Sayasa said the government panel did not address the concerns of the tricycles and multicabs common in the Visayas and Mindanao, which use gasoline instead of diesel.

Aside from the 75-centavo fare increase, Malacañang gave jeepney drivers and operators a P2 discount on diesel purchases at certain gas stations.

A report from the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) said Piston managed to cripple only 40 percent of the transport system in Metro Manila.

But Garvida claimed that Piston managed to paralyze 90 percent in Alabang in Muntinlupa, Manila, Cubao and Novaliches in Quezon City, and the Camanava (Caloocan-Malabon-Navotas-Valenzuela) area. Binangonan and Taytay towns in Rizal were also adversely affected by the strike.

At around 3 p.m. more jeepneys were seen plying their routes.

A PNP report said Piston members staged rallies on Aurora Boulevard in Cubao, Anonas and Molave streets in Project 3, and Quirino Highway in Novaliches, all in Quezon City. Members of the Kilusang Mayo Uno and Anakpawis also held rallies near Kamias and Kalayaan streets in the city.

Text message

A text message on Monday night headed off what could have been a crippling transport strike yesterday in eastern Metro Manila.

Oscar Taborite, president of the Marikina San Mateo Montalban Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association, received the message from De Luna, telling him to call off the strike.

Taborite said drivers followed De Luna's advice. Many drivers belonging to other jeepney associations, such as the Marikina Pasig Pateros Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association, also decided to hit the road. Similar actions were reported in Pasig and San Juan.

In Mandaluyong City, jeepney drivers decided not to join the protest, according to Mayor Benjamin Abalos Jr.

An official of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority said that compared to the jeepney strike on March 1, which left thousands of commuters stranded, yesterday's jeepney holiday was "insignificant."

High tricycle fares

Besides Angeles City, the strike in Pampanga also affected Mabalacat, Mexico, Apalit, Sta. Ana, Macabebe and Masantol towns and the City of San Fernando.

Many of the workers in Clark complained that tricycle drivers took advantage of the situation by charging high fares. Reports said tricycle drivers in Dau in Mabalacat were demanding at least P50 for a distance of only 3 km.

Tom Talavera of the Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator sa Pilipinas in Central Luzon said the protest affected largely Bataan, Bulacan, Pampanga and Zambales.

Leaders of the Bulacan Transport Alliance and BCODA-Piston said they managed to paralyze transport services in Bulacan by 90 percent, although the Central Luzon police chief said only 50 percent of the routes were affected.

In Tarlac, some 100 drivers and operators of public utility vehicles belonging to the Tarlac chapter of Piston held programs in support of the strike.

In Baguio City, Perfecto Itliong Jr., Baguio-Benguet president of Fedjodap, said some jeepney associations in the city refused to service residents between 8 a.m. and noon "in sympathy [with the strikers]."

Southern Tagalog

Rolly Mingo, secretary general of the Southern Tagalog Regional Transport Sector Organization, said drivers abandoned their routes as early as 12 a.m., paralyzing public transport in key cities and towns in the region by almost 90 percent.

He said some drivers decided not to join the stoppage "as they have to work doubly hard to put food on their table."

Mingo said they had established blockade points in Los Baños led by the Alyansa ng Manggagawa sa Probinsya ng Laguna and at Balibago, Sta. Rosa town, led by the Route of Transport Organization Reform and Alyansa ng Manggagawa sa Technopark.

The 4,000-strong Samahan ng Nagkakaisang Operator at Drayber sa Laguna erected a barricade in Pagsanjan town.

Almost 5,000 members of the Pulo Tricycle Drivers and Operators Association and the Calamba Federation of Tricycle and Drivers Organization joined the strike. Strikers also paralyzed public transport in Siniloan and Pangil towns.

In Lucena City, at least five trucks from the military's Southern Luzon Command based in Camp Nakar were deployed to ferry stranded commuters.

In Lemery, Batangas, about 40 jeepneys bound for Balayan town stopped plying their routes at 9 a.m., but colorum jeeps and air-conditioned vans took over.

In Bicol, only two towns, Buhi and Bato in Camarines Sur, took part in the protest.

Visayas

The strike paralyzed 95 percent of public transport in Aklan, according to Piston coordinator Aldrin Didulo.

Members of at least 22 associations of owners and drivers of jeepneys, buses and tricycle under the Aklanon Kontra Oil Price Increase and Oil Deregulation, stopped plying their routes at midnight Monday.

The strike also affected public transport between the capital town of Kalibo and Antique, said Didulo. At least 60 percent of around 2,000 tricycle units plying routes in Kalibo also joined the strike, he added.

The Nagkahiusang Drayber sa Sugbo (Nadsu) claimed that its members paralyzed 97 percent of public transport in northern Cebu and affected major routes in the cities of Talisay and Cebu.

Members of the Mandaue Operators Drivers Association based in Mandaue City also joined the strike.

Jessie Ortega of the United Negros Drivers Operators Center (Undoc), claimed that about 80 percent of public transport in the province was affected by the strike.

In Iloilo City, transport groups led by the Hugpong Transport and Piston held a 20-vehicle caravan around the city's main streets to show their support to the strikers in other areas.

Mindanao

In Cagayan de Oro City, members of the local transport federation and other militant groups rejected the government-approved 75-centavo fare increase.

Virgilio Valmoria, vice chair for Mindanao of the NTU and chair of Transport Federation of Cagayan de Oro (Trafeco), said his group would continue with the two-day strike.

"Our Manila NTU chair is negotiating right now, but, we still maintain our call to strike until [today] if our demands are not granted," Valmoria said. He said fuel prices were higher in Mindanao.

In Davao City, about 95 percent of public utility jeep drivers and operators joined the strike called by Transmission.

In General Santos, most jeepney drivers took part in the strike organized by the Transport Integrated Restructuring and Economic Services, which kicked off at 3 a.m. They were later joined by tricycle drivers.

In Butuan, almost 95 percent of the city's public transport system was paralyzed, according to Willie Cubillas, president of the Transport Federation of Caraga. *With reports from Leila B. Salaverria, Luige del Puerto, Edson Castro Tandoc Jr. and Margaux Ortiz in Manila; Tonette Orejas, Jun Malig, Carmela Reyes and Russell Arador, PDI Central Luzon Desk; Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; Romulo Ponte, Marlon Ramos, Delfin Mallari Jr., Mei Magsino and Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Jhunnex Napallacan, Carla P. Gomez and Nestor P. Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau; and Grace C. Albasin, Dennis Jay C. Santos, Anthony S. Allada, Aquiles Z. Zonio, Julie S. Alipala and Franklin A. Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

After graduation messages come GMA student awards

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign handlers are not letting the graduation season go to waste.

Aside from having her message read out during graduation rites in all colleges and universities and public elementary and high schools, special student awards have also been created in her name.

The Department of Education rushed certificates for the "President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo National Achievement Awards," to be distributed to about 22,500 high school students during graduation rites. Five students per school will receive the awards.

"It's a last-minute decision," said a DepEd employee.

The awards were created by virtue of a DepEd memo dated March 23. The certificates were ordered last week and shipped to some 4,500 high schools nationwide starting Saturday.

On March 16 and 24, respectively, the Commission on Higher Education and the DepEd ordered the reading of Ms Macapagal's message at graduation rites. In the message, which contains a reference to the May elections, the President cites her achievements in education.

For elementary schools, the principal reads the message, and for high schools and universities, a Cabinet official or his/her representative does. If neither a Cabinet official nor representative is available, the principal or the university president will do the honors.

Alyansa ng Pag-Asa standard-bearer Raul Roco, who once served as Ms Macapagal's education secretary, has accused her of violating academic freedom by using schools to further her campaign.

Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus said in his memo that Ms Macapagal's message was "intended to recognize the active collaboration among the parents, the school and the community in the education of the youth."

CHEd acting chair Manuel Punzal defended the inclusion of the "inspirational" message in graduation rites.

According to Punzal, Ms Macapagal does not explicitly campaign for herself or for her senatorial ticket in her message.

"When you're an incumbent, anything you do is seen as electioneering. But this is a democratic country," he said.

Luli says mom's critics don't know governance

From page A1

detractors would invent so many issues against [her]."

"We know we're still a solid family and we support her truly," she said. "And we, on our part, whatever our responsibilities are as part of the First Family, [we perform]."

Ms Macapagal herself is oblivious to the disqualification suits filed by her opponents in connection with her alleged use of public funds for her campaign.

"We trust the Comelec and the Supreme Court, and we believe that we can obtain justice in these tribunals," she said before campaigning in Bicol.

Ms Macapagal brought her campaign to the region to debunk expectations that Bicolanos would vote solidly for its native son, Alyansa ng Pag-Asa standard-bearer Raul Roco.

"We are confident that we will be vindicated in the face of the slew of charges against us, and that our service to the people and to the nation will be upheld," Ms Macapagal said.

But she said she would mount her defense quietly: "We do not want these harassment issues to blur the platform concerns that we are bringing to the people every day."

The President has appointed Miriam Defensor-Santiago, a senatorial candidate of the administration K-4 coalition, as her private counsel in the suits.

Case No. 9

Another disqualification case, the ninth, was filed yesterday against Ms Macapagal at the Commission on Elections, this time in connection with the compromise deal that her administration forged with Maynilad Water Services.

"The 'stinking deal' also constitutes violation of the code of conduct for public officials punishable by disqualification from holding public office. Likewise, it constitutes obstruction of justice," lawyer Oliver Lozano, a senatorial candidate, said in his petition.

Lozano said the deal was an illegal grant to gain political support from the Lopez family. *(See related story on Page A1.)*

If Ms Macapagal is elected, Lozano said she should be barred from holding office.

Lozano based his petition on newspaper clippings on the Maynilad deal.

In Dagupan City, Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. chided the people who had filed what he called "nuisance cases" against Ms Macapagal, saying they were expecting her to stop performing her constitutional duties just because she was seeking a full six-year term.

"When she distributes Internal Revenue Allotment [shares], when she releases funds for housing ... you mean she can release funds for housing only in July? Half of the country is paralyzed, half of 2004 is paralyzed, the public service will be paralyzed for six months of 2004 just because she is running for president?" De Venecia told reporters.

He said he was confident the disqualification cases would not prosper.

But he raised a note of caution: "She is just doing her job but, like incumbents running for reelection, she should not go beyond the boundaries, like engaging in vote-buying."

Ads on Dolphy show

Ms Macapagal earlier disclaimed knowledge that top comedian Dolphy was starring in a TV sitcom, but her camp has actually placed campaign advertisements in the show.

Documents obtained by lawyers seeking Ms Macapagal's disqualification showed that her campaign ads were aired at least three times on Dolphy's show, "Home Along Da Airport," in February.

The ads—all 60-seconders—were aired on Feb. 14, 21 and 28.

"As of March 19, she had already logged 205.5 minutes equivalent to 284 spots in different stations, including Solar Sports," said lawyer Demaree Raval of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

Raval made the statement after yesterday's hearing on the disqualification petition filed by lawyer Jose Vicente Salazar, a member of the group Pro-Con(stitution).

During the hearing, the lawyers of the contending parties were told to speed up the process by agreeing to some of the evidence, including the logs of various stations.

Salazar filed the case on March 15, saying Ms Macapagal had logged 189 minutes of TV time from Feb. 10 to March 11.

He said Ms Macapagal had logged a total of 242 spots—most of them 30- and 60-seconders—during the period, and that these totaled 189 minutes, or 69 more than the limit imposed by the Comelec.

He also said Ms Macapagal violated not only Section 86 of the Fair Elections Act but the resolutions of the Comelec as well.

Section 6 of Republic Act 9006 (the Fair Elections Act) states that all registered parties and bona fide candidates shall be entitled to not more than 120 minutes of TV ads and 180 minutes of radio ads, and local candidates, to not more than 60 minutes of TV ads and 90 minutes of radio ads.

But according to excerpts of the Feb. 18 meeting of the Comelec en banc, the commission "clarified" this, saying that national political parties and candidates could each have 120 minutes for each TV or cable station and 180 minutes for each radio station.

The Comelec also said local candidates would be entitled to 60 minutes over each TV or cable station and 90 minutes over each radio station. *With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana and TJ Burgonio in Manila; Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Leave me alone, De Castro's daughter tells mom

From page A1

family. I am happy now. I hope she will stop bothering us ... That is enough)."

Torralba, 59, made headlines when she talked to reporters at a rally of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino last weekend and said she was campaigning against De Castro, whom she accused of lying about the legitimacy of their daughter.

Appearing with Manueli on the ABS-CBN evening news program, De Castro said he had never dis[illegible] his daughter and said Tor[illegible]ations were part of "a [illegible]da" concocted by his politic[illegible].

De Castro, now [illegible] ABS-CBN executive Arle[illegible]-at-De Castro, said he had never kept secret the fact that Manueli was his daughter with Torralba. He said that it was he who put her through college and even helped her daughter's husband get a job.

Reached over her mobile phone yesterday, Torralba said: "I'm glad that he finally brought Manueli out into the open.'"

"He had not acknowledged Manueli before in public," Torralba said.

Asked to comment on her daughter's plea to be left in peace, Torralba said: "*Hindi ko sila ginugulo* (I'm not bothering them)."

"I only want Noli to bring her out in public," she added.

Torralba said she last saw Manueli in December when her daughter gave birth.

'Blackmail'

In his television interview, De Castro sought to discredit Torralba, saying, among other things, that she had pending criminal cases and she had remarried a number of times.

One was to a Pakistani national, another to a German, he said.

De Castro accused her of trying to "blackmail" him with demands for money.

"*Ang isa sa banta niya ay mapipilitan siya, pag hindi siya binigyan ng pera, ay magpapa-interview sa TV at nanakot siya na baka raw ako ay hindi natatakot na matalo* (One of her threats, if she is not given money, is that she will be forced to go on television and she asked if I was not afraid of losing)," the senator said in the TV interview.

Said Torralba: "He may say a thousand accusations against me but what is there to lose. I'm not the one running for public office."

She claimed that De Castro had not even finished college, completing only his second year as a student of banking and finance at [illegible] University of the Philippines.

"He doesn't have any diploma to show," Torralba said. "I know that because we were once together."

Opposition vice presidential candidate Sen. Loren Legarda decried as "unfair" insinuations that she or the opposition had anything to do with Torralba's surfacing.

Legarda told reporters it was not her style to malign other people, especially De Castro, who she said was her "*kumpadre.*" Legarda stood as godmother to De Castro's stepdaughter when the latter recently got married.

The senator said that actually, she pitied De Castro after his ex-wife came out in public.

Legarda made it clear that she only met Torralba during the opposition rally in Bohol, telling reporters that the latter had introduced herself as the wife of De Castro after shaking hands with her.

She admitted, though, that Torralba was a distant relative of her supporter there, Choy Torralba.

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Annan fires UN security chief over Iraq bombing

UNITED NATIONS—Secretary General Kofi Annan fired one senior UN official and demoted another Monday for failing to protect UN staff ahead of the Aug. 19 bombing of UN headquarters in Baghdad that killed 22 people.

Acting on the findings of a scathing report detailing mistakes made by several senior officials, Annan singled out Tun Myat, the UN security coordinator, who was asked to resign and did so.

The report said Myat and others "appeared to be blinded by the conviction that UN personnel and installations would not become a target of attack, despite the clear warnings to the contrary."

The secretary general also chastised his deputy, Louise Frechette, who chaired a steering group on Iraq when the United Nations decided last May that UN staff could go back into the country after the US-led war. She submitted her resignation but Annan refused to accept it, UN spokesperson Fred Eckhard said.

"The secretary general, taking into account the collective nature of the failures attributable to the Steering Group on Iraq as a whole, declined to accept the resignation," Eckhard said.

The action appeared to be unprecedented at the United Nations, where senior leaders are almost never rebuked in such a public fashion. But the bombings were extraordinarily traumatic for UN staff, who refer to the tragedy as "our Sept. 11."

Annan's decisions were based on the recommendations of a panel he appointed in November to investigate who was to blame. In October, after an independent group pointed to "dysfunctional" UN security for unnecessary casualties in the Aug. 19 bombing at the UN headquarters in Baghdad, which also killed top UN envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello, and wounded more than 150 others.

Ramiro Lopes da Silva, the acting head of the UN mission who was responsible for security at the time of the bombing, was demoted as assistant secretary general and will take up a post at the World Food Program that does not involve security issues. *AP*

7 ex-Soviet nations join Nato

WASHINGTON—Nato on Monday signed up seven new countries in Eastern Europe in a historic expansion that takes its military muscle to the Russian border, heightening concerns in Moscow.

The prime ministers of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia deposited "instruments of accession" to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's founding Washington treaty and brought the number of members to 26.

"To the seven heads of states here assembled, I say to you and to your people: Welcome to the greatest and most successful alliance in history. Welcome," said Colin Powell, the US secretary of state.,

He said the expansion was a "historic step" in achieving a vision to extend "Europe's zone of freedom and security from the Baltics to the Black Sea."

"Nato is determined above all to prevent aggression," Powell said. "Now it is determined above all to promote freedom, to extend the reach of liberty and to deepen the peace."

President George W. Bush met the leaders of the new members at the White House later, along with the prime ministers of Albania, Croatia and Macedonia, which also want to join Nato.

Bush seized the opportunity to highlight the US war on terrorism.

"Today, our alliance faces a new enemy, which has brought death to innocent people from New York to Madrid. Terrorists hate everything this alliance stands for. They despise our freedom. They fear our unity," he said.

"They seek to divide us. They will fail."

Russia again expressed disquiet over the biggest increase in Nato membership since it was founded at the height of the Cold War in 1949.

"Without doubt, Nato's expansion touches Russia's political, military and, to a certain extent, economic interests," Russia's foreign ministry spokesperson Alexander Yakovenko said in a statement released before the ceremony.

"If we feel that this expansion poses a threat to us that demands a military response, this response will follow," the Russian news agency Interfax quoted Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Chizhov as saying.

Russia is particularly concerned about the inclusion of the Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. All are former Soviet republics that could now provide a base for Nato troops on the Russian border.

"The Cold War is indeed over," said Romanian Prime Minister Adrian Nastase at a press conference of the seven leaders.

"Today is a great day for all our nations," said Latvian Prime Minister Indulis Emsis. "I express my gratitude to the United States government for the support our nation has experienced during all those long years of the Soviet occupation."

Nato Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said air defense patrols over the Baltic Republics could start straight away. Russia fears these patrols could be used to spy on its territory.

De Hoop Scheffer, who will go to Moscow in early April, acknowledged there could be problems with Russia over the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty, which limits troop numbers in Eastern Europe. But he insisted there was no need for tensions.

The Baltic republics and Slovakia were not independent states when CFE was signed and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said all four will have to join the CFE and keep to its guidelines until they do.

"There are some nuts to crack, of course," said the Nato chief.

"When I say we have some nuts to crack, it's, of course, Russian worries about the effectiveness of the CFE treaty. Nato worries about the Russians still having their forces in Moldova-Transdniestra and Georgia."

Nevertheless, he said, "Nato needs a partnership with the Russians. It's in Nato's interest and at the same time it is in Russia's interest that we have a strong partnership." *AFP*

2 more suspects in Madrid train blasts charged

MADRID—A Spanish judge charged two more suspects in the Madrid rail bombings early Tuesday as the incoming Socialist government, facing international pressure over plans to withdraw troops from Iraq, doubled its deployment to Afghanistan.

Shortly after the hearing ended, an investigator speaking on condition of anonymity, said another suspect had been arrested, but gave no details.

Judge Juan del Olmo charged Basel Ghayoun, a Syrian, with mass killings in the March 11 bombings that left at least 190 people dead. The judge also charged Morrocan Hamed Ahmidam with collaborating with a terrorist organization.

At the same time, the judge released three suspects after questioning. Of the 22 people arrested, 14 have been charged and six have been released. In addition to the latest suspect arrested, another person was arrested Friday but has not been publicly identified and has yet to appear in court.

Court officials said two witnesses, including one who was wounded in the attack, had placed Ghayoun on one of the commuter trains that was bombed. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Petition to void Taiwan polls

TAIPEI—Taiwan's high court on Tuesday began considering the opposition's request to nullify President Chen Shui-bian's narrow reelection—a victory his challenger argues was marred by voting irregularities and a mysterious election-eve shooting that wounded Chen. Lawyers for the losing candidate, Lien Chan of the Nationalist Party, filed their wide-ranging petition challenging the March 20 vote with the high court overnight, party spokesperson Justin Chou said. "This petition represents our trust in the legal system," Chou told reporters. Later Tuesday, the president sent a letter to the court, agreeing that a recount was needed, said Cheng Wen-tsang, a spokesperson for Chen's Democratic Progressive Party. *Reuters*

France to name new Cabinet

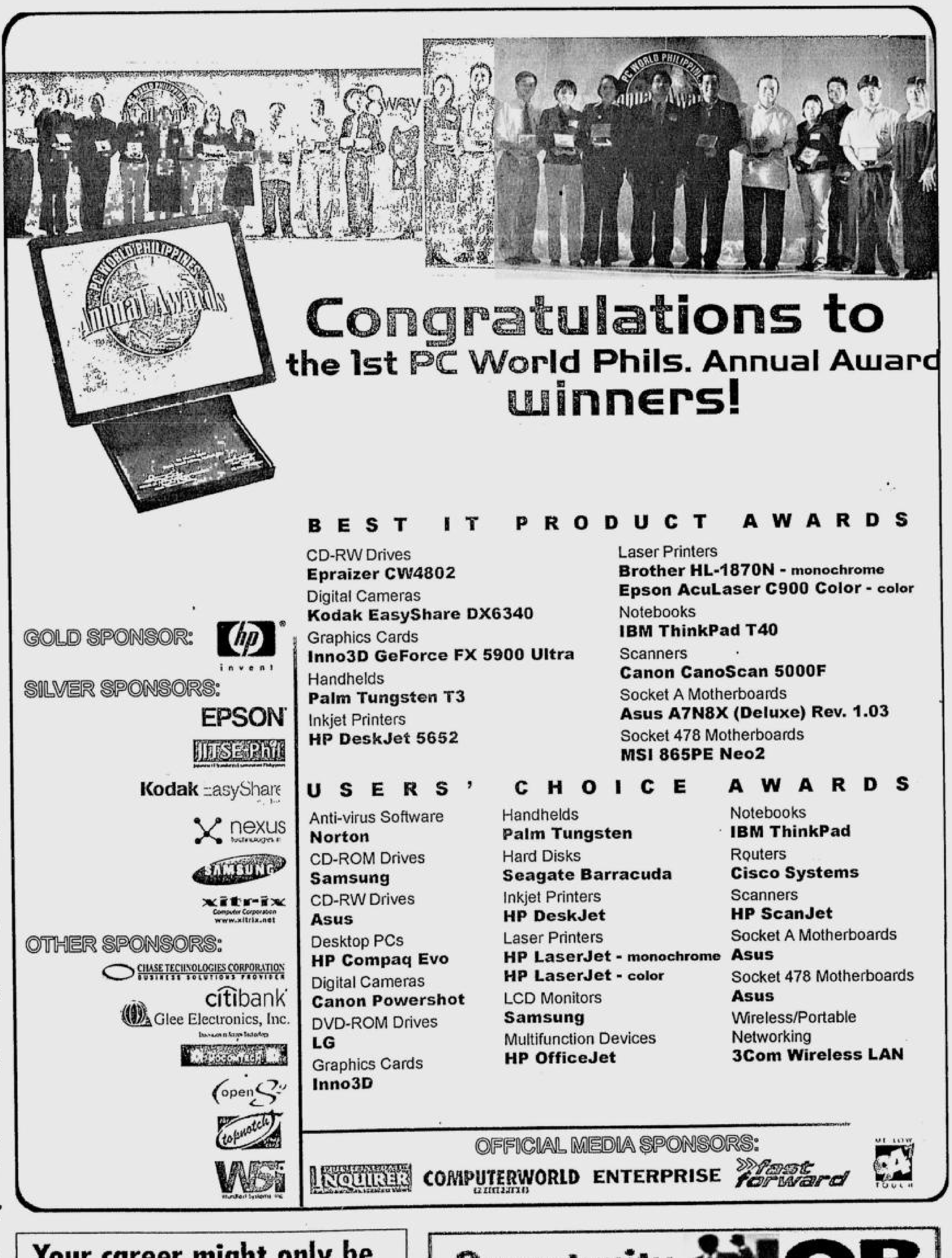
PARIS—France will announce the composition of its new Cabinet on Wednesday, the office of President Jacques Chirac said on Tuesday, days after his conservative government suffered a rout in regional elections. Chirac on Tuesday decided to keep embattled Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin in his job despite a crushing defeat in Sunday's elections. The first meeting of the new Cabinet was due to take place on Friday, Chirac's office said. *Reuters*

Witness vs Milosevic

THE HAGUE—Former Bosnian Serb politician Miroslav Deronjic has been a star witness against Slobodan Milosevic and other top suspects at the UN war crimes tribunal. On Tuesday, he faces sentencing for his own crimes. In a deal with prosecutors, Deronjic, 49, confessed to a single charge of persecution for ordering the destruction of the Muslim village of Glogova in Bosnia on May 9, 1992, killing 65 civilians. In exchange for his plea and testimony against Milosevic and others, prosecutors agreed to drop five other charges against Deronjic and recommended a prison sentence of 10 years. *AP*

Haitians protest handover

CAP-HAITIEN, Haiti—First the rebels handed the station over to police officers. Angry civilians started protesting about police abuses, scaring the officers away. Then the French moved, rifles at the ready, and persuaded frightened officers to return. Monday's events in Cap-Haitien are a sorry example of the instability that seems the most predictable factor in Haiti one month after the hasty departure of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the arrival of US-led peacekeepers. *AP*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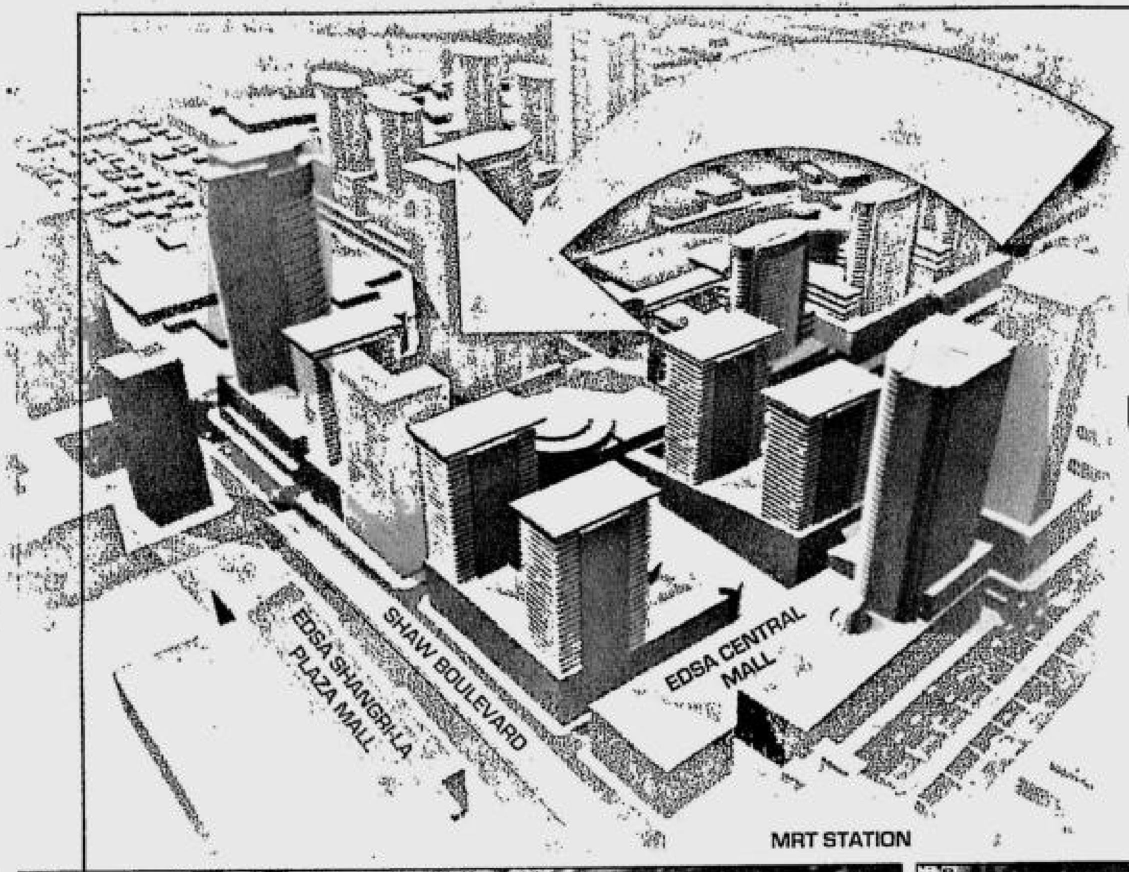
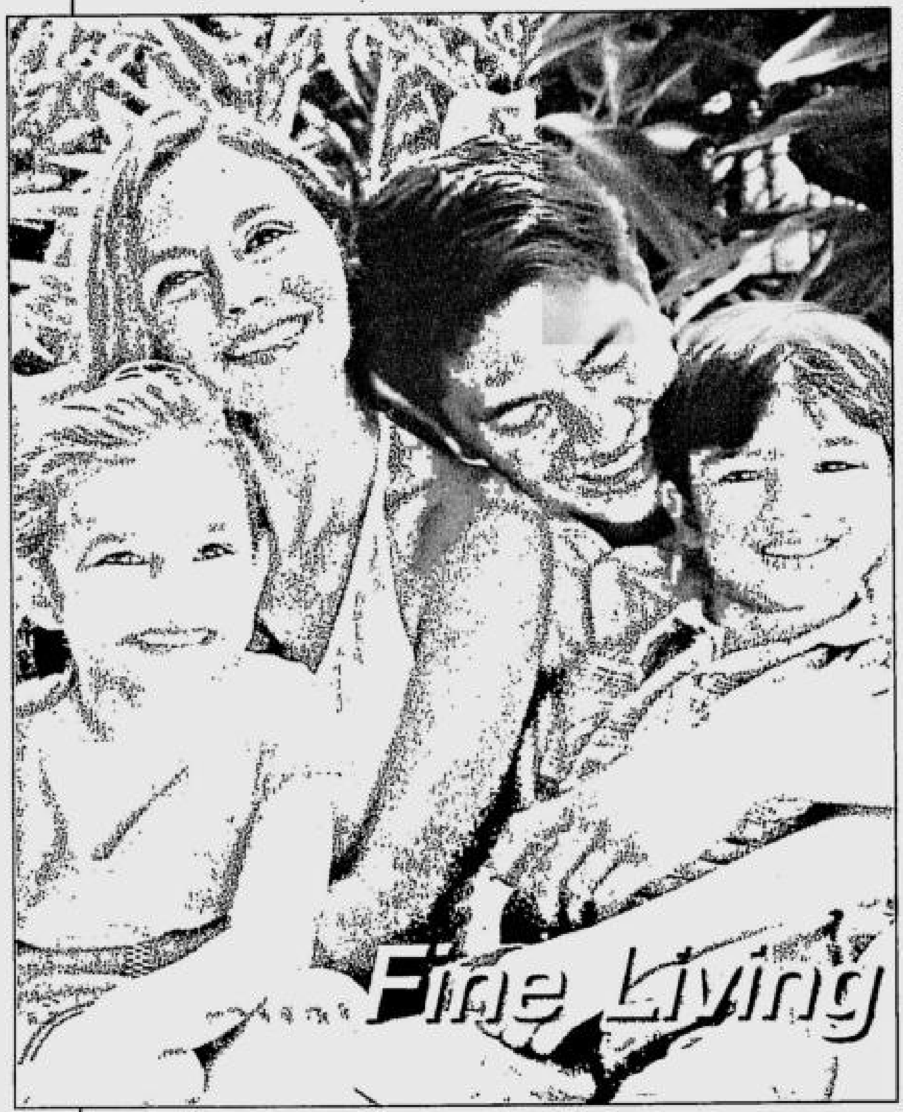
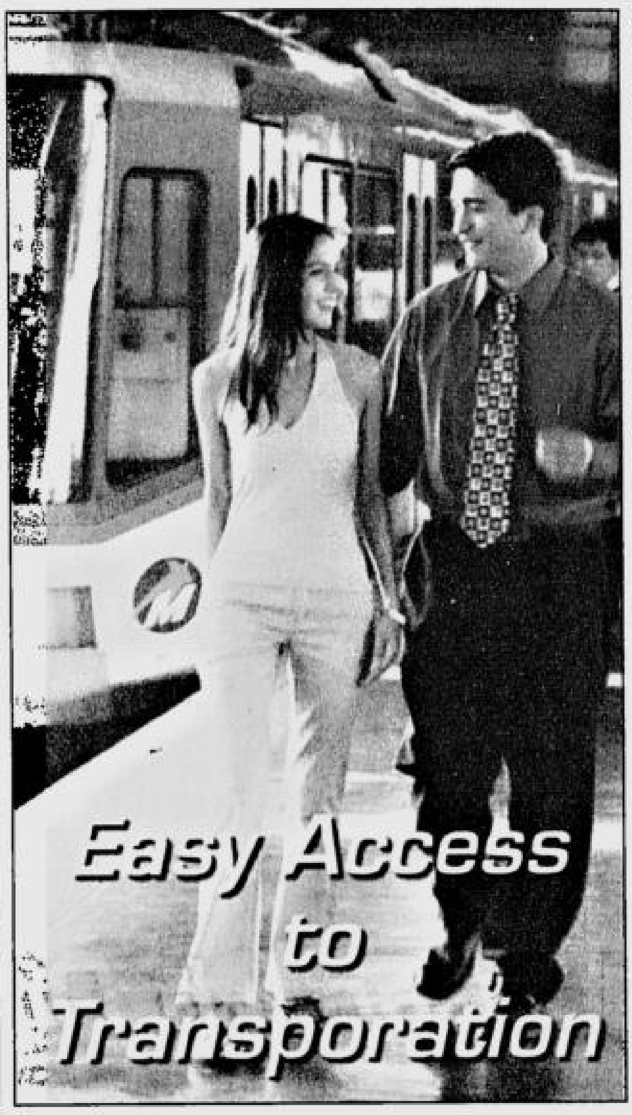
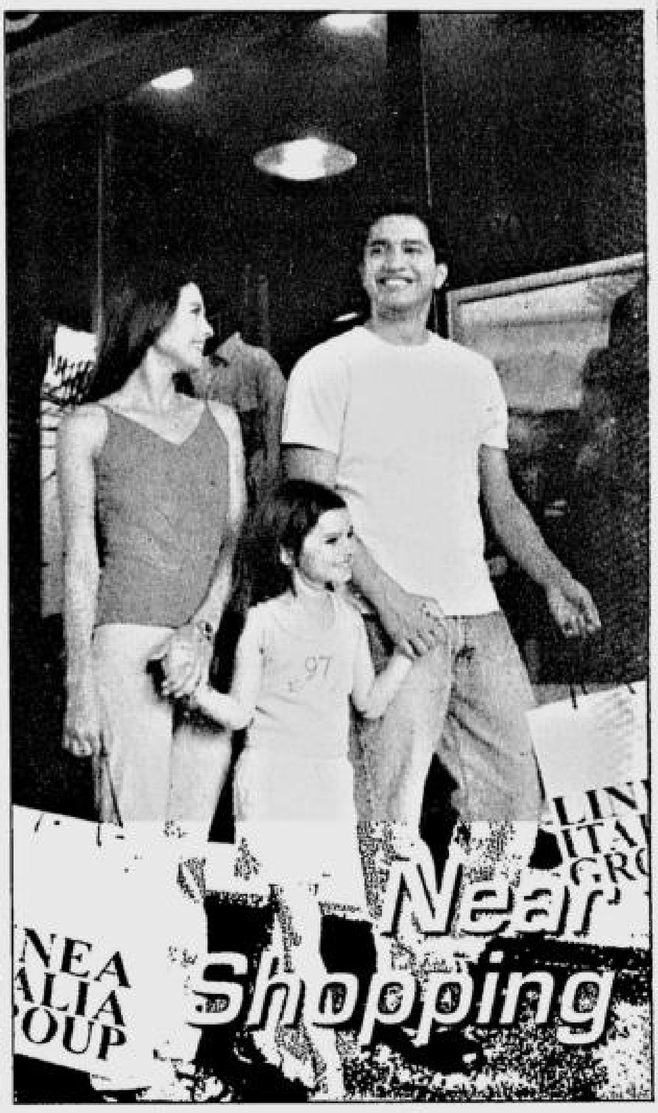






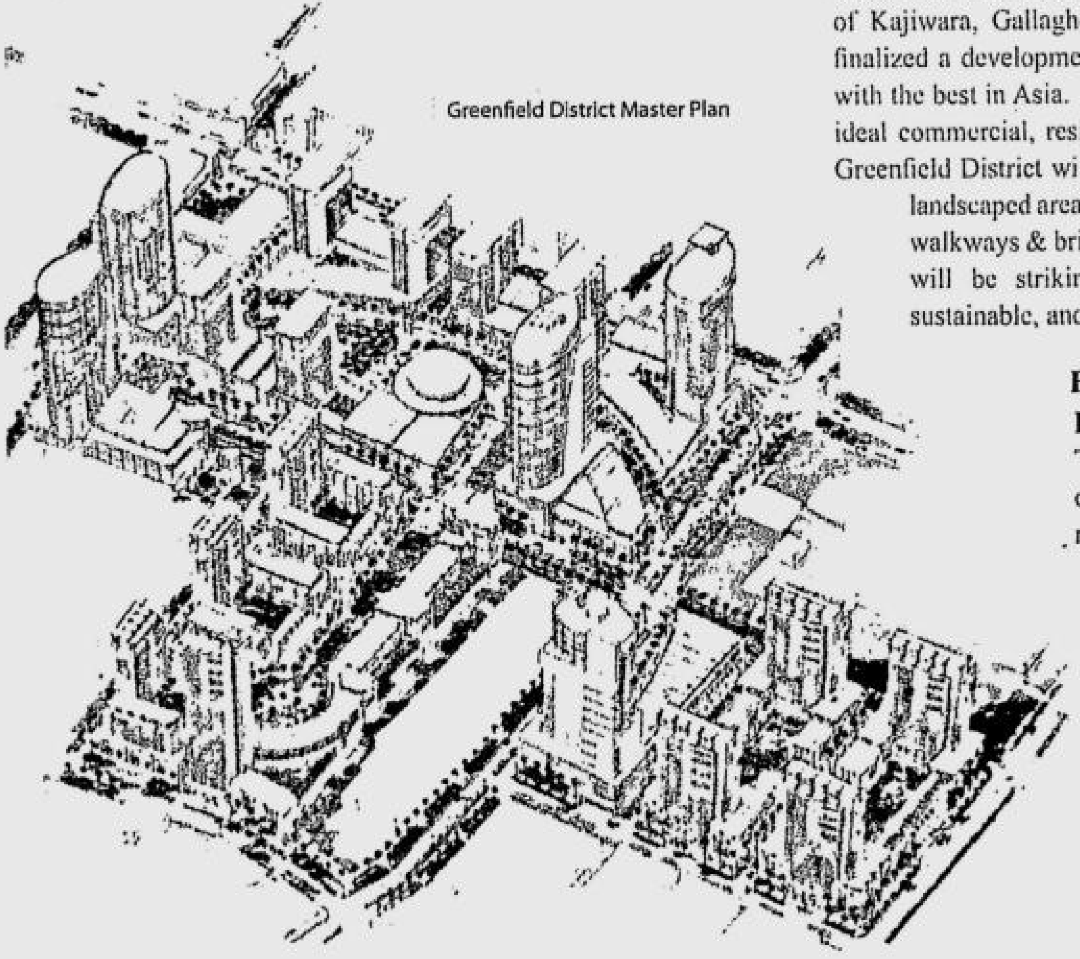


Recent studies on lifestyle trends indicate a strong movement into city centre living. With the daily grind of traffic and long commutes, people are now realizing the value of living in an ideal location to bring back quality in their lives – a location where transportation access, work places, and leisure areas are within easy reach.

At the corner of EDSA and Shaw Boulevard will soon emerge Greenfield District – a modern 24 hectare commercial and residential masterplanned development. And at the core of this future development is SOHO CENTRAL – a new residential project where every convenience is right at your doorstep.

The New City Center

Rising along Metro Manila's bustling main thoroughfare will be a new city centre called Greenfield District. Covering a land area of 24-hectares, this ultra modern, self-contained metropolis will be the epitome of superior living. Imagine enjoying all the comforts and convenience of a live, dine, shop, work and play enclave right in the middle of a progressive centre.



Greenfield District Master Plan

Greenfield Development Corporation, the real estate subsidiary of Philippine powerhouse Unilab, along with the world-renowned design consultant firm of Kajiwara, Gallagher & Paine Design Studios, has finalized a development blueprint that will measure up with the best in Asia. The design envisions to create an ideal commercial, residential and transportation center. Greenfield District will feature numerous parks, shaded landscaped areas with water features; and covered walkways & bridges. It's a grand master plan that will be strikingly functional, environmentally sustainable, and highly accessible.

First High-rise Development Unveiled

The first project to signal the onset of the Greenfield District redevelopment is Soho Central a 35-storey premier residential condominium right in the center of the master plan. The project is a joint venture between Greenfield Development Corporation and Meridien Development Group - one of the Philippines most reputable developer Meridien has over two decades of developmen experience, and is responsible for building Essen East Forbes, the Philippines' most luxurious residenti landmark.

The Soho Concept

SOHO is one of the hippest neighborhoods in Ne York and London. Its colorful past marks a history young artist in the 1960's quietly moving into buildin which provided "lofty" spaces to answer the crave authenticity in their living environments.

Soon, the areas developed into a communit transforming itself into a residential, commercial an artistic zone. Today, cities showcasing the Soho lifest are the liveliest and most cosmopolitan locatio producing pulsating entertainment and leisure. Excell restaurants, trendy shops, coffee bars and music avenu abound in the area.

Presently, many people look to lifestyle as well th proximity to job location as an indication of where reside. The amazing balance between work and pleasur now proves to be the key to a modern and mobile socie Soho is not just associated for its fantastic locati and vibrant character but also stands for "small offi home office." According to Meridien Developme Group Chairman Jose E. B. Antonio, "People's lives and the environment are closely connected. The work, living and public areas must be planned and designed according to the users' way of life. The Soho concept offers the freedom for a comfortable and ideal lifestyle."

Transportation Oriented Development Concept

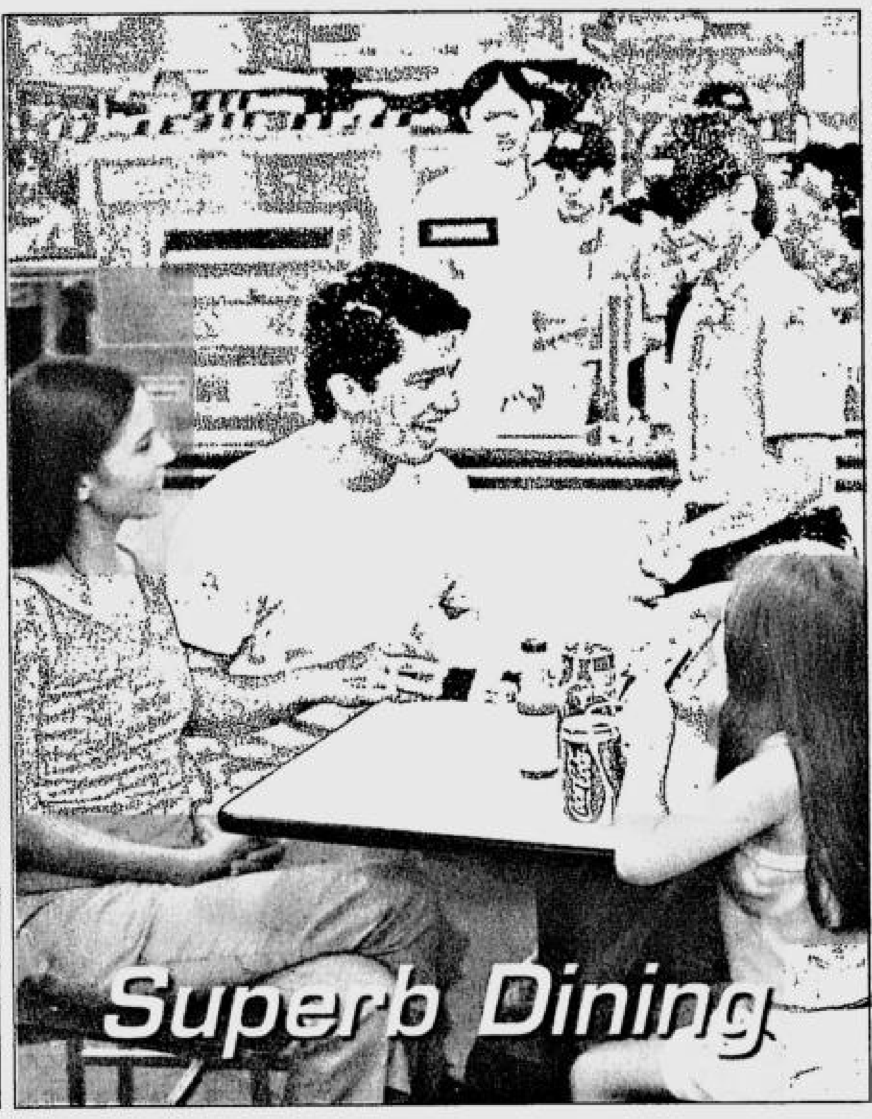
The Transportation Oriented Development, or TOD, is a popular trend in urban development in the 21st century. TOD's are residential buildings which are located, or directly connected to, a transportation hub. They are planned to give utmost importance to accessibility and connectivity creating a modern,

Travel Times via

MONUMENTO
10 min
DOROTEO JOSE
10 min

central
the Middle of it All

Convenience



Near Schools

gracious and convenient environment for work and leisure.

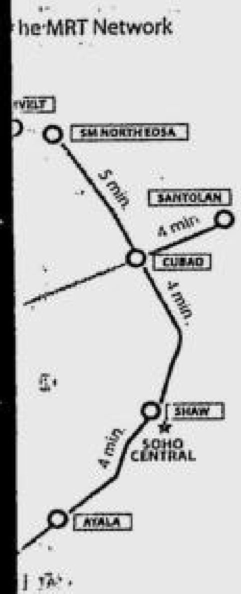
Stemmed from these ideas. Meridien Development Group and Century Communities Corporation. subsidiary of real estate giant Century Properties Inc.. introduces the Soho brand in the Philippines. Nothing is more ideal than to live in a place where every convenience is right at your doorstep.

Enviable Location

Located near the newly-improved EDSA Central Mall, Soho Central will be the residential mecca for people looking for quality lifestyle and convenience as it will be a few minutes walk to nearby malls including Shangri-La Plaza, SM Megamall, Robinsons and The Podium. Also close by are offices, schools, churches and hotels. Going to Makati is just a short 4-minute train ride while going to Quezon City will also take 4 minutes via EDSA MRT station which has a direct connection from Soho Central.

Outstanding Project

Apart from its ideal location, Soho Central features impressive building facilities and amenities. Floor and Unit plans at Soho Central are skillfully designed and fits in with the dynamic lifestyles of contemporary urban dwellers. Functional and stylish, the units come complete with kitchen cabinetry and bathroom fittings. Each unit will also have its own balcony with full view of the environs. Other luxurious features and amenities include: a swimming pool, a spa and health centre, a landscaped Zen garden, meeting and function rooms, a business centre, two floors of retail spaces, ample parking and laundry and dry cleaning facilities.



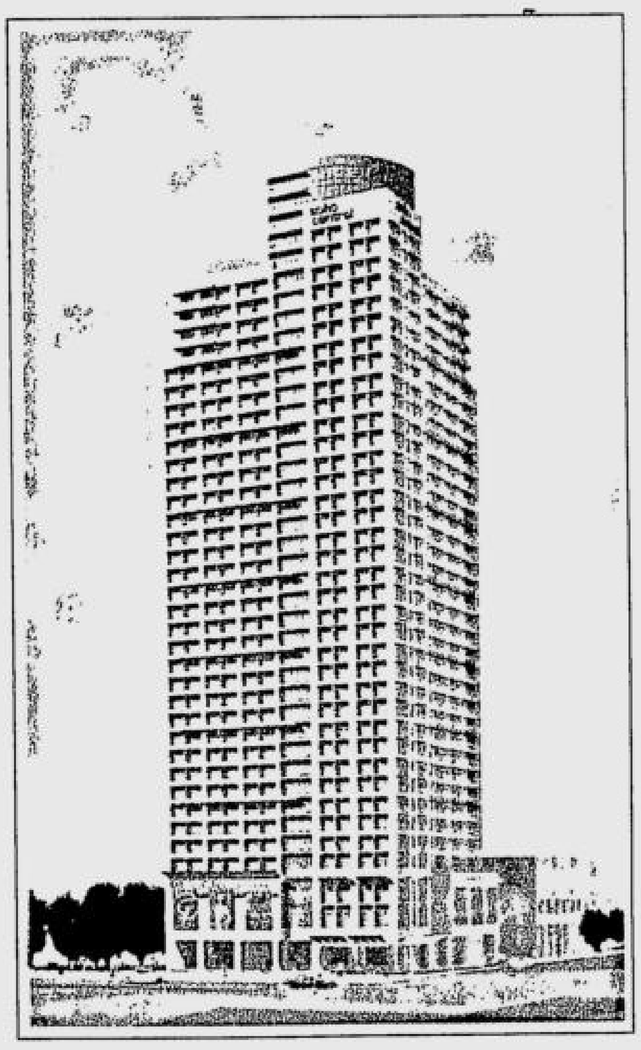
The two floors of commercial space will feature cafes, restaurants and other lifestyle oriented establishments. "City centre living appears to promote more sustainable lifestyles. The attraction and stylish appeal of work and play areas available at your doorstep can be very ideal especially to young urban professionals and young couples." adds Antonio.

Finally, Soho Central offers unit sizes, prices and payment terms that make it attractive and feasible for most people to own a unit.

The Soho Club

All unit owners of Soho Central and other Soho projects become automatically enrolled in the Soho Club - designed to create and build a unique community and select network of people passionate about work and leisure. The membership provides instant recognition and a warm welcome to select establishments as it entitles members to a range of discounts and exclusive promotional offers and events.

"Over and above providing the perfect residence, we want to present owners of SOHO the avenue to unleash a whole new extra-ordinary lifestyle." says Meridien Development Group CEO Ricardo Cuerva. Events and activities include movie premiers, exhibits, open bar parties, wine tasting, cooking demonstrations and interior design fairs. "Our Soho projects fulfill the Filipino dream to own their ideal home as it provides a unique sense of place - a place to live, work and enjoy life's pleasures. Revel a skyline, enjoy a vibrant mix of activities, savor the convenience of mobility and enhance a lifestyle, all at unbelievably affordable prices," ends Cuerva.



You can now experience the **SOHO** lifestyle at the model unit center in the ground floor of the new Edsa Central Mall.

For inquiries, please call **6700-7610 • 818-3361 loc. 125**

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EDITORIALS

Stupidities

IN THE ARGOT of the street, familiar to Fernando Poe Jr., the President of the Philippines has challenged him to a pissing contest. The challenge was actually made by Secretary Michael Defensor, who, reacting to comedian Dolphy calling the President "*tonto*," or stupid, came out with a "*tonteria*," or stupidity, of his own: the challenge to a debate to see who is smarter. Stupidity was piled upon stupidity when Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye remarked in a statement that the opposition combined an uncontrollable temper with "insolence." Over the radio, Bunye soft-pedaled somewhat by saying it might all have been a "joke" on Dolphy's part.

It may have been a joke, but it was a tasteless one made by Dolphy in Cebuano, obviously pandering to the mob. The dig at the President, however, pales in comparison to the arrogance of the President's people who reacted with the kind that seems to infect people who work in the Palace.

In the first place, it reveals the purely tactical, and obviously unstatesmanlike, attitude of the President's campaign regarding a debate. People have been clamoring for a debate between the presidential aspirants, and yet it was Poe and the President who scuttled the first one, and who continue to stonewall any efforts to include them in a second scheduled debate. The purpose of the debate, for those who have pushed for one, is to offer the electorate a substantive discussion of issues. And yet, here come the President's people saying they want a debate to prove the President is smarter. This is equivalent to saying, in an all-female race, that there should be a beauty contest to prove a candidate is less ugly than the other.

In the second place, the use of the word "insolence" by a member of the President's official family is, itself, the height of insolence. We do not have a monarchy, and we do not have a dictatorship with pretensions to being monarchical. We do not have, in our laws, the crime of lèse majesté, or casting aspersions to diminish the dignity of the sovereign. In a republic, the president is not a superior, but the first among equals, and only for a limited time. Citizens can be guilty of being rude or obnoxious to the president, and this is wrong, but only because it is wrong to be rude or obnoxious to anyone, president or pauper.

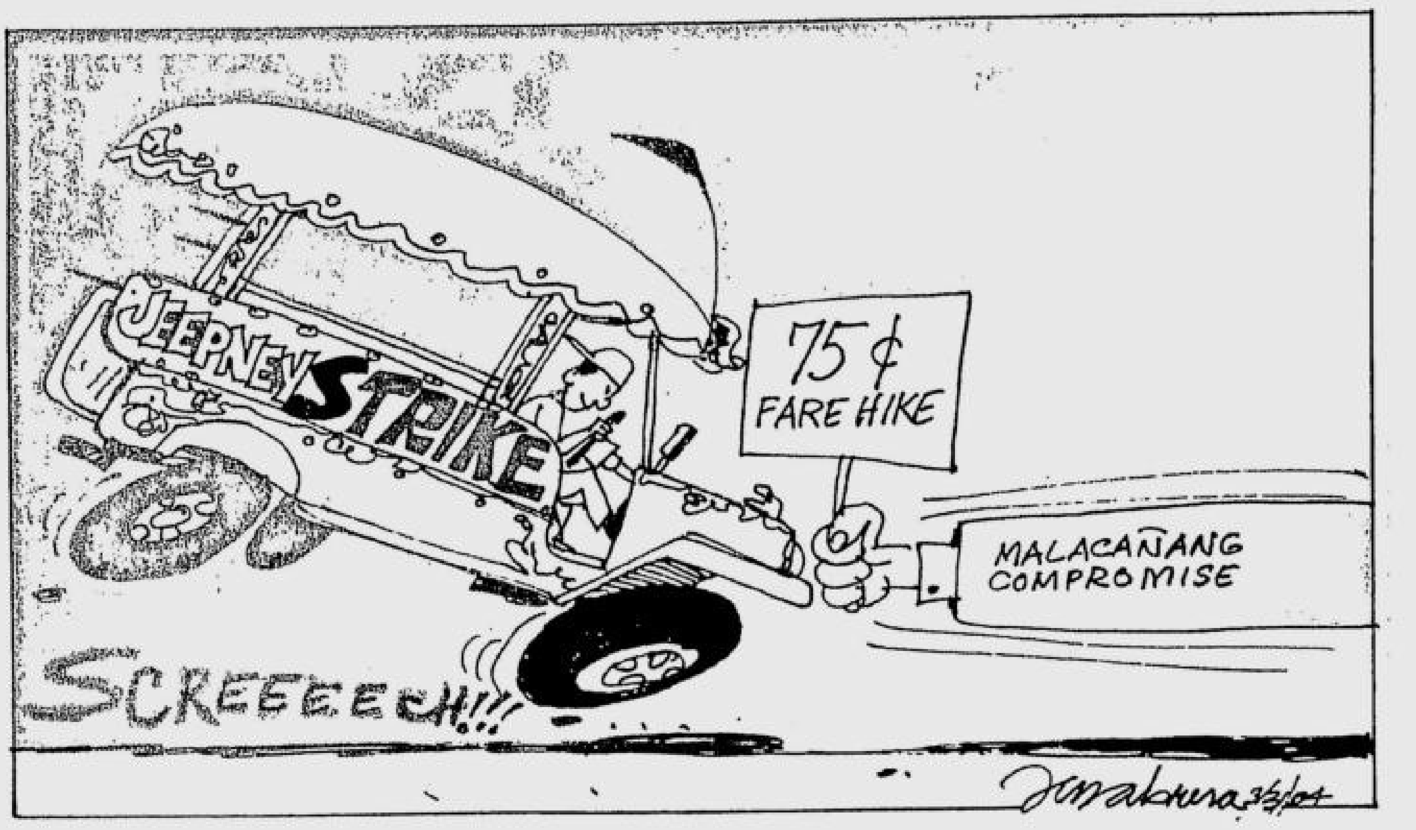
This is what we mean by the insolence of a public official calling a citizen, of whatever political stripe, insolent. This is what we mean by a challenge to debate to prove one candidate is smarter than the other merely a pissing contest, and not a debate. Two dumb dumbs do not make a right, so to speak.

Civility

DOLPHY'S stinging insult on the stump, however, points to an increasing lack of civility in our public discourse. This is all the more unsettling at this time since the President is female, and what would be par for the course, insult-wise, between male politicians, may be considered ungentlemanly when aimed at a female opponent. On the other hand, the male politician is at a disadvantage if the female opponent sneers at an opponent and then, to use a term from a more sexist era, "hides behind her skirts" to deflect any stinging retorts.

We are not a nation that has developed the fine art of the barbed verbal—or even written—attack veiled in phrases that aim to score points without resorting to cheap shots. We adore the pointed remark made with pungent phrases. Our various languages throughout the country are rich with words to describe stupidity, avarice, arrogance, or combinations of these. Our mass media all too often resort to using these phrases for maximum effect. We shouldn't be surprised when our politicians or show-biz personalities use insulting descriptions to maximum effect.

However in politics, as in sports, self-control and restraint are the primary means by which passions are kept from being inflamed to the extent that they can threaten to wreck the game itself. We are a nation that adores insults, but views being insulted with a fierce resentment. We like to malign the honors of others, but feel obligated to defend our personal honor to the death. A certain civility is necessary in our political discourse not only because we owe it to each other, but rather, civility is the only means to keep our politics from becoming deadly. When candidates see red, and view a political contest as a war in defense of their personal honor, the reduction of governance to a fight over feudal territories begins.



Two Mels challenge Atienza and Belmonte

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

QUESTIONS: If President Macapagal-Arroyo is Tonto, who is the Lone Ranger?

Who will win the Pidol vs. Pidal war?

* * *

The mayoral fights in Manila and Quezon City next month will be interesting, like boxing bouts between former champions versus the reigning champions. Former Mayor Mel Mathay is trying to get his crown back from reelectionist Mayor Sonny Belmonte, while former Mayor Mel Lopez is trying to unseat Mayor Lito Atienza. Some observers claim the incumbents are unpopular with their constituents who long for the return of their predecessors. On the other hand, the incumbents have very visible and popular achievements: Atienza's Bay Walk, River Walks and Plaza Lawton beautification projects are very popular. For his part, Belmonte boasts that he has transformed his city from a money loser to a money earner. Quezon City now has the fattest bank account in all of Metro Manila, claims Belmonte.

Yes, but at what cost? counters the two challengers. The two Mels were guests at the Kapihan sa Manila last Monday.

Manila's Mel said that the Bay and River walks and Plaza Lawton projects are indeed attention-getting, but that the city got deeply indebted to the Philippine National Bank for them. Meanwhile, what has City Hall done for the health, education and other welfare needs of Manilans? he asked. Nothing.

If he becomes mayor again, Mel said, he would give priority to the latter needs of Manilans. He would continue the beautification projects, he added, but only if the city can afford it.

For his part, Quezon City's Mel distributed official data from the Departrment of Finance to belie the claim that Quezon City is now the country's richest city and that this was achieved through efficient tax collection. The data showed that Makati is still the country's richest city. In 2002, Makati collected P4.829 billion in taxes while Quezon City collected only P4.738 billion. In 2003, Makati collected P6.420 billion while Quezon City collected only P5.024 billion.

Mathay said that the present city administration claims that its increased tax collection was due to more efficient tax collection. False.

According to affected businessmen, he said, the higher tax collection was brought about by:

1. Unprecendented increase in business tax rates ranging from 145 percent to 499 percent under Ordinance SP 1080, and in certain categories from 43 percent to 300 percent under Ordinance SP 11892.
2. The imposition of a new tax, a 2 percent city tax to contractors and city owners securing excavation permits, building permits and occupancy permits.
3. The auction sale of tax delinquent properties.

Contrary to claims of increased tax collection through efficiency, Mathay said DOF records show otherwise. In 2002, when Quezon City implemented the questioned ordinances, the target was placed at P5.072 billion. However, its actual collection was only P4.738 billion, or a shortfall of P333.4 million. In 2003, its target was P6.167 billion but its actual collection totaled only P5.024 billion, or a shortfall of P1.143 billion.

DOF records also show, Mathay added, that out of the targeted economic enterprises collection of P101 million, Quezon City actually collected only P20 million. "It is the lowest in Metro Manila, as far as percentage of actual collection to targeted collection is concerned," Mathay said.

The present city administration claims that the objections raised by businessmen against the two ordinances has already been resolved when the city council enacted Ordinance SP 1189 reducing the tax rates imposed by Ordinance SP 1080.

Not so, said Mathay. The cases questioning the two ordinances belie this claim, he said. The first case was filed with the Department of Justice by the motor companies led by Diamond Motors Corp. The second appeal was filed by Philip Morris Corp. Both business groups paid their business taxes for 2002 under protest. They assailed the legality and validity of the ordinances on the grounds that the rates were excessive and that they were enacted without due notice and public hearing.

The DOJ, in two separate resolutions, declared the ordinances null and void. In the first case, the ordinance was nullified on the ground that the increase in rates was beyond the 10 percent allowable provided in the Local Government Code and the 1987 Constitution. In the second case, the ordinance was nullified for lack of notice and public hearing which are procedural requirements provided by law before the enactment of a tax ordinance.

Thus nullified, the next issue that should be addressed by the city government is: Should it not refund the excess business taxes it collected in 2002? Mathay asked. Roughly, the estimated refund would cost the city government from P600 million to P800 million.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Retailers Association has filed two separate petitions with the Quezon City trial courts assailing the legality of the two tax ordinances (SP 1080 and 1189). The fact that these cases are still pending with the courts belie claims that the issues raised by the business groups have already been resolved, Mathay said.

We will give Mayors Belmonte and Atienza an opportunity to rebut the contentions of the two Mels at the Kapihan sa Manila after the Holy week. Meanwhile, we are announcing that there will be no Kapihan forum on Holy Monday. The next forum will be on the Monday after Easter Sunday.

Dubious distinction

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

WE'VE earned another dubious distinction. That is, in producing two of the most corrupt leaders in the world. They both belong to the Top 10 in the list made by the UK-based Transparency International. The list puts Suharto ahead of the line for having plundered from $15 billion to $35 billion of his nation's wealth. He is followed by Ferdinand Marcos who ran away with $5 billion to $10 billion of his countrymen's money. Erap comes 10th with a loot of $78 million to $80 million.

Erap of course is incensed and plans to sue TI. He says the release of the TI report is politically motivated, coming as it does during the presidential campaign, where his good friend Fernando Poe Jr. is running. He asks why TI did not research the plunder of his predecessors, Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos, and the one currently being wrought by his successor, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The Suharto camp has reacted in pretty much the same way, saying the release of the report was politically motivated. A Suharto lawyer says the report was meant to discredit Suharto's eldest daughter who is running for parliament in next month's elections. TI's Indonesian representative laughs off the accusation, and rightly so.

There and then, we have an idea of why this country hasn't progressed over the past several decades. Indeed, why it has fallen from being second only to Japan in the 1950s to probably now second only to Laos or Cambodia among the poorest countries in Southeast Asia. And at that, Laos and Cambodia might complain. This is a country where pillage is a national pastime.

Erap however does have a point about TI being stricken blind about the plunder of his predecessors and successor. The scale of pillage during those times and GMA's time is just as breathtaking. In fact, the only difference between then and now and Erap's time is the brazenness with which Erap stole. A brazenness that came, like Marcos', from a sense of absolute power, from a feeling one could not be touched. Marcos had martial law, Erap had an overwhelming electoral mandate. The difference has little to do with the sums. As sums go, the scale of pillage wreaked by Cory's Kamaganak Inc. and Ramos' Philippines 2000 may even exceed Erap's. The current ransacking of the public treasury being done by GMA to cling to power may do so as well.

But why does pillage happen so easily in this country? Why, despite all the laws penalizing it, does it take place as naturally as rain in July?

My thesis here is not that our leaders tend to be more venal than those of other countries-though, heaven knows, that proposition has a merit all its own—but that we tend to be less outraged by corruption than other people.

That may be a strange thing to say given that the two Filipino leaders considered among most corrupt in the world are also the ones that produced two of the most dazzling events in the world, which were Edsa I and II. But at the very least, I've never been convinced that what sparked both Edsas was the pillage per se. I've always thought what sparked them was the intolerable abuse, the kind best described in Tagalog as "*bastusan na*" or the in-your-face, screw-you, raised-middle-finger, kind of oppression that elicits the reaction, "*tama na, sobra na.*" At the very most, which proves that contention, the pillage did not abate after the two Edsas, and no one seemed unduly exercised by it. Until the last couple of weeks in fact, "political analysts" were giving GMA a good chance to win because she was going to cheat and spend taxpayers' money like a drunken sailor. You'd think that was the most natural, or acceptable, thing in the world.

I attribute this to the fact that we really have no concept of taxpayers' money. A term that in countries like the United States resonates with the stern benignity of the 7th Commandment: Thou shalt not steal. What makes it easy for our leaders to steal is our lack of furious resistance to it. And what makes for our lack of furious resistance to it is our unwitting belief that taxes are our *balato* or gratuity to government and not a claim to service.

That is never explicitly said, but that is always implied in what we say and do. What makes it so hard for us to part with a portion of our hard-earned pay is that we know it isn't going to come back. A thing reinforced by signs on half-repaired roads and bridges and waiting sheds that say "This is a project of Mayor or Governor So-and-So." If it comes back at all, it is only as an act of benevolence on our leaders' part. I am proposing in all seriousness that that sign, like the one that used to say, "No Return, No Exchange," which was deemed illegal by the Department of Trade, be deemed illegal as well by the Supreme Court.

Someone told me recently that a jeepney driver once told him he didn't particularly care about corruption in government because it's not his money they're stealing, he doesn't pay taxes anyway. Wrong. He pays taxes whenever he buys gasoline, he pays taxes whenever he and his family go to watch a movie, he pays taxes whenever he buys any article that has VAT tacked to it. Everyone pays taxes, it is as inevitable as death. Unfortunately, what has been just as inevitable is that our leaders pocket it.

The source of corruption in this country begins with our tacit belief that what we pay every year to government is not taxes but tribute. It won't end, or lessen, unless we start revising that thought. By all means let's try to get back the money Marcos and Erap stole. But let's prevent it too from being stolen further, which is happening even as we speak with GMA using our money to regale us with her face everywhere.

We don't stop that, and soon, we may yet have a third candidate for the 10 most corrupt leaders in the world.

Overly litigious?

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE BARRAGE of court cases seeking the disqualification of President Macapagal-Arroyo leads us to ask whether her opponents are driving the election to the courts, rather than the voters, to decide who will be the next president of this country.

At least seven disqualification cases have been brought to the courts or the Commission on Elections, alleging among others, excessive election spending, breach of limits to air time and political advertising, illegal use of public funds for electioneering, and vote-buying. She has also come under stepped-up attack over the controversial government decision to take over Maynilad Water Services. The decision has been criticized as a bail-out that provided relief for the debt burden of the Lopez family-controlled Maynilad.

We grant that the President—who seeks an electoral, not a judicial, mandate to continue in office—is fair game for attacks in the heat of the campaign, but the charges fired at her should be fought in the electoral arena. They don't belong in the overworked courts. It's up for the voters to believe or reject the charges.

The purpose of an election is to let the voters decide whether to throw out a government. Those who have riddled the President with suits have lost sight of the fact that this election is about giving the next president the legitimacy of a popular mandate, to end all doubts of electoral legitimacy that have plagued this administration.

The concentration of attacks coming from all opposing sides amounts to an implicit admission by the President's opponents that she is the person to beat and has the effect of making her an underdog and could shift public sympathy to her. By overdoing the assault, her opponents are not at all helping their electoral chances, but are turning public opinion in the President's favor in a very close contest. They are inviting an opinion backlash.

The lawsuits reveal a litigious Filipino mentality that have involved Supreme Court intervention in political issues over the past three years. The public has had more than enough of judicial interventions which have been ferociously challenged by those who have questioned the legitimacy of accession of this government.

In the heat of the campaign, public debate has degenerated into name-calling and abusive language. This abuse aggravates the degradation of public debate, which refuses to confront issues that should matter to the lives of the people after the election.

The lack of focus on issues in the election campaign was deplored by a visiting academic on the role of the media in the electoral process.

In a recent lecture sponsored by the US Embassy, Stephen Farnsworth, professor of government in Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. noted the lack of media focus on election issues. He said that media should talk about issues and look at the campaign "through the eyes of voters." Voters should be asked what they think the problems are and how they can solve them, he said. "This way, citizens are given a sense that they matter."

He said, "Debates are an effective way of ascertaining who's trying to respond to the issues and who's not. If candidates are going to dismiss the concerns of citizens, then the citizens are going to dismiss them." He was obviously referring to refusal of some candidates to attend debates.

Turning his attention to election surveys, Farnsworth said stories on surveys should not be overplayed because they tended to cause more harm to candidates by telling voters that the race is over even before the voting starts. He said that in the United States, as in the Philippines, TV and newspapers had increasingly concentrated on how the presidential race was going instead of what issues the candidates were talking about.

This may be correct in the media coverage of the Democratic primary election process, which highlighted Sen. John Kerry's campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, overturning poll surveys that put him trailing early front-runners. In the primary process, in which voters participated in selecting state delegates to the Democratic convention, the opinion polls tended to reflect changing voters' mood rather than voters confirming what opinion surveys said.

In the US campaign, there has been a change on emphasis toward issues after the more dynamic events of the primary process, which aroused more public interest, because of the intense competition in the Democratic Party than in the Republican Party, in which President George W. Bush is unchallenged for the party nomination. Issues have taken salience, as controversy developed over Bush's decision making in invading Iraq.

As the Iraq invasion, Bush's war record and Kerry's Vietnam war record and position on domestic issues, have highlighted the issues of the election debate, they have shifted media attention to the issues that now clearly divide the Republicans and the Democrats.

Rather than focus on issues, the Philippine election campaign has moved in the reverse direction. It has moved away from issues and toward court cases and name-calling in public rallies. We should expect a more vitriolic campaign in the next 40 days, since media coverage of the campaign tends to emphasize color and abusive outpourings by entertainers nursing illusions of their political power or deciding the outcome of presidential elections.

Exploiting women's sexuality

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

SOMETHING must be said about this, my last column for Women's Month this year, being about the continuing exploitation of images of women in the media, especially in advertising.

So far, the advertisers of that tasteless brandy promoted as being "15 years old," have hung tough, even daring to bring the AdBoard to court for recalling the "Kinse Anyos" ads after the campaign raised a storm of outraged protests. Fred Lim, former Manila mayor and now candidate for senator, even led a group of supporters to one of the brandy billboards, climbed no a crane then cut out the word "kinse" from the headline. I don't know about the legality of Lim's action, but I don't think it has had the desired effect. Driving by a billboard that says "*Nakatikim ka na ba ng ____ anyos?*", the macho motorist or commuter could even substitute a lower age in the blank spot, increasing its titillating power.

As if to justify their tasteless advertising campaign, the brandy makers now claim the public outrage over the ads has even led to a sudden spike in sales. If true, all I can say is that the next time someone offers you a drink of that cheap brandy, you'd better keep any 15-year-old girl or younger that you care about—your daughter, niece, granddaughter or god-daughter—a safe distance away. And wives, should your husband come home with a bottle of that brandy, I can only advice you to listen to your deepest suspicions.

I don't know why anyone would want their product identified as the drink of choice of pedophiles and sexual predators. Unless preying on minors is something to be proud of these days.

* * *

BUT it isn't just the exploitation of young women's and children's sexuality that bears looking into.

Reader C.V. sent me a copy of the Summer 2003-Summer 2004 calendar of Southeast Asian Airlines. "What is Southeast Asian Airlines (Sea Air) trying to promote—our country or prostitution?" writes an outraged C.V.

The desk calendar features several Filipinas posing in the nude, with settings that range from a bedroom, a garden and the beach. The photos aspire to art but fail for a number of reasons: many are grainy, the poses are awkward at best, the women aren't even that good-looking. C.V. poses the right question: Is the calendar meant to promote tourism or sexual services?

This brings to mind a poster produced by the Department of Tourism sometime in the early 1980s that featured a pretty Filipina, dressed in a native costume, with the headline: "Visit the Philippines, there's more where she comes from." Women's groups raised a howl, questioning the ad's real intent. This was, after all, the era of sex tourism, when groups of male tourists, mostly Japanese, would be flown in on packaged "sex tours" and bused from airport to brothel, seeing and experiencing little of the country beyond the four walls of seedy bedrooms.

By promising "more" of the likes of the young woman, then, wasn't the government indirectly promoting sex tourism?, the critics asked.

* * *

AFTER EDSA, the Aquino government sought to put an end to sex tours, tightening regulations on incoming tour groups and imposing sanctions on the local organizers. What happened then is that, with the influx of sex tourists suddenly slowing to a trickle, the pimps and managers and other exploiters in the sex industry turned to trafficking our women instead. It was around this time that the migration of Filipino women to Japan, as entertainers and cultural workers, grew to a flood. Many of them ended up eventually being forced into prostitution. We had merely reversed the flow of the transaction.

In a country where a magazine like FHM can feature nude women in provocative poses and shoot to the top of the best-selling "glossies," where photos of young bar girls in Subic raising their blouses and baring their breasts in some perverse form of "beauty contest" are circulated freely on the Net, and where elderly male senatorial candidates prance onto rally stages to the tune of a raunchy hit about a red and moist flower opening—is there any point to protesting the exploitative images of women?

Feminists are in a real bind, I must admit. On one hand there's the long-standing struggle to get women and society to acknowledge women's sexuality, to recognize its valid expression and exercise. Yet on the other hand, women also feel uncomfortable about the continuing exploitation of women's sexuality, especially for prurient and commercial purposes. Where does one draw the line between art and pornography, free expression and exploitation? Will that American Supreme Court justice's assertion—that one knows pornography when one sees it—be enough to satisfy us?

* * *

EVEN before the "Kinse Anyos" controversy, there was a similar uproar raised in Dagupan City last year, over two billboards that displayed a naked Caucasian woman, her privates covered only by the back of a chair that she's straddling, promising the imminent arrival of some product (orange juice?).

In a manifesto, the Liwawa ed Asinan Foundation Inc. (LEAF), headed by its president Lina Melecio-Tan, who also heads the Abanse! Pinay chapter in Dagupan, requested the provincial and city governments "to have the billboards removed from public view in order to preserve the meager gains of the campaigns against violence in homes and on the streets."

In response, the city council issued a resolution calling for the dismantling of the billboards, after which these were duly pulled down and removed from the sight of Dagupan folk.

I wonder, can't the local governments playing "host" to the "Kinse Anyos" billboards issue similar resolutions and do the right thing?

Market day in Iloilo, circa 1856

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

ILOILO prides itself on the title "Queen City of the South" whatever that means. I don't know where this title came from, who made it up, or how old it is but if Iloilo is the Queen, what is the "King City of the South?" Perhaps there was a time in the past when Iloilo was such a busy port it was second only to Manila in importance?

Whenever you mention Iloilo to a modern Filipino many things come to mind (none of these historical, of course), among them sugar, haciendas, sugar barons and different types of cookies. Last weekend I tried to find some historical resonance in the city especially in many of its grand old houses, many of which are falling apart or offered for lease or sale. It is quite sad that the first landmark you see when the plane touches down is a Shoemart Mall. While this is an indicator of economic progress, one would wish Iloilo heritage were more visible.

One thing I noticed in Iloilo is that there was not a single FPJ poster in the place. There were a handful of Loren posters no match for Noli whose MGB smile was everywhere. There were many GMA posters, about some Eddie Villanueva and none for Roco. Then there were Uswag Iloilo posters from Mayor Treñas. One wonders how the election results will be in Iloilo, which is home to many university and college students. Unable to explore the city I at least witnessed: the conferment of an honorary doctorate in Technology Management on Lucio Tan by the Western Visayas College of Science and Technology and the installation of heritage markers on two landmarks: the beautifully restored Roca Encantada (Enchanted Rock) on Guimaras and the white art-deco "Boat House" built by Eugenio Lopez in Iloilo in the 1930s. Getting to and from these places, we passed by Muelle Loney, the port named after Her Britannic Majesty's Vice Consul Nicholas L[illegible] who lived in Iloilo from 1856 till [illegible]

Naturally, Loney left serious consular dispatches that I have not found the enthusiasm to read till now. What has been published though are a series of letters to his family written from 1852 to 1866, covering his stay in the Philippines and the trip from Manila to Iloilo. These charming letters have since become a primary source for historians trying to piece together the history of Iloilo. In late November 1856, Loney described Jaro market, thus giving us a glimpse of life in those times:

"I should like to show you the plaza of Jaro on a market day at about two in the afternoon when the *movimiento* reaches its apogee. On Thursdays, the usually empty stalls are furnished and decked out by their proprietors with attractive goods. Showy handkerchiefs, dresses, gauze and blond kerchiefs of the head, lace, ginghams (all of a check or plaid pattern), *sarongs*, Chinese silk, trouserings, cotton twist, jacanettes, muslins, blue and white shirtlings, etc. etc. with a sprinkling of hardware, glassware and 'all sorts' calculated to overcome the aboriginal mind and make it shell out its hard-earned real[e]s and quartos. These stalls represent capitals from £50 to £500 in stock.

"Temporary shops of bamboo and of palm leaves are also improvised for the sale of different native products comprising of leaf tobacco in assorted bundles, earthenware, woven baskets, hats of straw and bamboo, mats, hemp of a very fine quality used in the native [illegible], coarse cakes of sugar, rice, dri[illegible] [illegible] pineapple leaf fibers, cotton [illegible] made from native cotton, oils, vegetable pitch, cowries, skins, nondescript eatables and other heterogenous rummy-looking things. The square becomes a perfect babel on market days, and looking out from my windows which command the whole scene, you behold a congeries of confused groups where *camisas* are mingled with *sarongs*, civilians with principales, *sombreros* with *pañuelos*, and the subdued-looking Indian damsel with the more noble and self-asserting (though somewhat porcine) mestiza...

"Sallying forth into the scene of action you forthwith find yourself tumbling over long rows of brown and canary colored damsels seated on the ground each with a small heap of silk and cotton *sarongs* (a sort of large pillow slip open at both ends in which the women envelope themselves), kerchiefs, trouserings etc. of native fabric. Besides these vendors of indigenous goods you also observe swarms of other daughters of 'our general mother' perambulating the different shops and offering their delicate *piña* and *sinamay* goods to the critical examination of the mestizo purchasers. Conceive this with the usual gabble of a multitude intent on the absorbing process of buying cheap, and selling dear, under the shadow of a thousand umbrellas with which they vainly endeavor to ward off the glare of a noonday sun when the tall cross in the plaza scarcely leaves an atom of shadow. Consider the bright colors, and the shifting groups, the strings of jaded horses and oxen, the confused rows of primitive vans and vehicles, the church tower looking scorched up and ready to topple down with the heat... then conceive the done up, irresolute-looking figure of Nicholas Loney mooning across the square, armed with a silk umbrella, a self-expatriated Briton, the only specimen of his race on the islands."

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

The accidental dog

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

IT was 1989 and it had been a year since my parents didn't have a dog. So one Sunday I picked up my mother and we went off to a kennel to pick out a puppy, emphasis on "a."

It wasn't hard deciding we wanted the brown smooth-haired dachshund with the naughty eyes. Her official name on her pedigree certificate was Alma, and she had eight other siblings with names like Lorna, Snooky and Carmi, which shows you how pervasive our cinema mind-set is.

So there we were, finalizing the deal on Alma when suddenly, out of nowhere, came this black wire-haired male, its tail furiously wagging away like a metronome except that instead of going tik-tok tik-tok it seemed to go, take me, take me.

That's how we ended up with two new pets, one accidental. We eventually changed Alma's name to Sasha, but retained the other puppy's pedigree name, which was Bates, apparently named after some basketball player.

Sasha and Bates were inseparable, although they had totally different personalities. Sasha was the queen, spending her days sunbathing and sleeping. She was hard to please, always complaining about something and scheming to get her way. She was also rather suspicious of people, quickly retreating whenever there were visitors and sizing them up from a distance.

Bates was the exact opposite, managing to catch the attention of visitors so he could be invited in to join the party and get his belly scratched. He was every vet's dream, carefree and easy-going, never struggling whether you were giving him the foulest tasting medicine, getting him his vaccinations or treating his wounds. He was easy to please, eating anything, sleeping anywhere, although I have to say he seemed almost never to sleep—even in his old age I'd find him spending the nights pacing back and forth, his tail still wagging away, albeit more sluggishly.

Now here's some *tsismis*: the strange thing about Bates and Sasha is that—well, this being a family newspaper, I'll have to whisper—they never did "it." Through their 13 years together, nothing ever happened when Sasha would come into heat.

All of which proved to be a source of great distress for Marietta, my parents' *mayordoma*. Several times, as we'd watch the two dogs romping in platonic bliss, she'd wonder aloud in Tagalog: "Maybe Bates is... you know..." and I'd play innocent, "What?" and she'd go, "You know what..."

One summer after we returned from a family vacation, we noticed that Joan, a third dachshund my parents had adopted (it was a battered dog), was putting on weight rather quickly. Marietta finally confessed: while we were away she'd brought Bates to the backyard, which was Joan's territory and, well, things finally happened, much to the relief of Marietta who couldn't bear the idea of having a, you know what, dog.

Sasha was quite magnanimous, enthusiastically adopting the love pups as her own but never quite forgiving Joan, who had to stay in the backyard. Sasha and Bates went on leading fairly uneventful lives except when he began going deaf and the household helpers would holler his name, vowels confounded so it sounded more like "beach," or worse.

Bates wouldn't have cared less about his name. He was content as long as he had his meals, his baths, a bit of beer, his belly-scratching and of course, Sasha, who was the alpha dog in their relationship. When Sasha became ill and had to make frequent trips to the vet, he'd sit out in the yard howling his heart out until she returned. When Sasha died he was inconsolable, whining and threatening to starve himself and follow Sasha to the grave. Then it occurred to me that we could transfer Joan to the front yard to stay with him. Oh, but you should have seen the mourning widower, hardly able to conceal his delight at the prospects of a new life with an old flame.

"Men," my mother muttered in absolute disgust, "They're all alike."

Time did catch up with Bates—his hearing went, his vision faltered, and I think he had his senior moments too, but he was still our grand *guapo* dog, our big boy. A few months back, he began having kidney problems but held up quite well as we put him on a strict diet. Last week though, my mother told me he wasn't eating and was sleeping a lot. I was heading out for Thailand but dropped by to check him out. He ate the dog biscuit I offered, but I knew he was just being polite, and that he wasn't doing well at all.

"Big boy," I told him as I scratched his belly, "I think it's time to go."

Two days later, I called my mother from Bangkok, knowing my father was away and sensing she needed some moral support. I was right about my gut feel: Bates was gone and I thought it was so much like him to amble in and amble out of our lives, so accidentally and therefore so wondrously special.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

THEY SAID

Difficult to smile

"When you do a lot of problem-solving, it is difficult to be pleasant."

—President Macapagal-Arroyo on her legendary temper

Off-line

"The problem is that since the government is not capable of restoring the machines to their virgin state, the demand for a refund is offline."

—Alfredo Lazaro Jr., lawyer for Mega Pacific eSolutions Inc. on orders to refund government of its P1.3 billion payment for the company's counting machines

5-year high school

"How could the government justify adding another school year in high school if even an elementary graduate is qualified to run for President in this country?"

—Raul Roco on the 5-year curriculum for high schools imposed by the Department of Education

The INQUIRER is a member of the
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The National Association of Philippine [illegible]

Overspending Congress

IT is shocking to know that Congress spent an average of P18.4 million per day in 2003 even as about 27 million Filipinos (or about 34 percent of the Philippine population) do not have food on their tables three times a day. This is based on a study conducted by the Forum for Democratic Options in 2003.

And it is more shocking to know that one law passed in the 12th Philippine Congress cost about P227 million for the period June to November 2003, considering that Congress passed only 19 laws within the same period.

If a family of six needs about P600 per day for food, housing, education, health and other basic needs, then for one year the family needs about P219,000 (P600 x 365 days a year). Therefore, the cost of one single law can feed and house and assure other basic needs of 1,036 families for one year.

This is not to say that we should not have a Congress to make laws. This is just to say that we do not deserve a Congress that spends so much and does too little. We deserve better people in Congress.

—AURORA A. PARONG, M.D.,
executive director,
Task Force Detainees
of the Philippines, 45 St. Mary St.,
Cubao, Quezon City

Faster response from GSIS urged

WHAT is happening to the GSIS? Why has it been delaying the release of loans to government employees, especially in the local level?

As a liaison officer for Lucban, Quezon, I always get the blame for the GSIS' neglect in providing for the needs of its main contributors from the public sector.

Last March 15, I was even publicly berated by the municipal treasurer for reportedly not following up the loans. But what can I do? Despite repeated follow-ups, the GSIS staff always give the excuse that they're attending to three months' worth of backlog. This, despite our being prompt in remitting our contributions to this government agency.

I am therefore appealing to President Macapagal-Arroyo to intervene and help us get what is due us from the GSIS.

—ERVIE NANGA-ANTONIO,
human resource
management officer,
Lucban Municipal Government,
Lucban, Quezon

LETTERS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Due to lack of funds

THIS refers to the letter of Minda Pacheco Tabora last Feb. 20 on the non-payment of her mother's old-age pension until her death in July 2002.

Records on hand show that upon receipt of the necessary documents to support her mother's claim, PVAO immediately approved it on June 25, 2002 under Master list No. 02-01034. The delay in payment of her pension was not due to callousness of our officials but mainly to lack of funds.

—ROGELIO A. DAYAN,
administrator,
Philippine Veterans Affairs Office,
Camp Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, QC

Root of unemployment crisis

LATEST official data reveal that the unemployment rate reached 11 percent in January this year. While lower than the 12.2 percent recorded in July 2003, it remains alarmingly high, indicating that the current crisis in the labor market is far from over. Meanwhile, the constitutional mandate for the state to promote full employment has been virtually abandoned.

Why do we call the current situation a crisis? Because unemployment today matches levels reached at the height of the 1983-1985 recession, the deepest recession in the country's postwar history. Because four million Filipinos are jobless and another 5.5 million underemployed.

The current unemployment crisis was triggered by the 1998 Asian crisis. Six years later it refuses to go away, this despite consistent economic growth during this period at a pace that, mind you, outperforms some of Asia's best economies. What is left unsaid is that the Philippines alone has been left behind to wallow in a worsening unemployment crisis.

Why do we have a crisis? Because we are now reaping the bitter fruits of economic reforms sown in the last two decades. Reckless import liberalization and tariff reduction have made the Philippine economy today more import-dependent than it ever was. Hence, economic growth does not always translate to job growth.

We have an unemployment crisis today because government has abandoned its historical task to build a dynamic manufacturing base. Industrial policy has become a feared word in policymaking circles. The result is a shrinking industrial sector or de-industrialization. Instead, government has relied on agriculture and services to generate jobs. But without a healthy industrial base, growth and job creation in agriculture and services are simply not sustainable.

In a situation this bad, trite admissions of failure to resolve unemployment without recognizing the role of economic reforms in the crisis are not enough. Nor do motherhood statements on generating employment suffice. We challenge political parties to engage in a public debate on how to reverse de-industrialization, create adequate quality employment and fulfill the constitutional mandate for full employment.

—DANIEL EDRALIN,
chair,
Alliance of
Progressive Labor,
102 Scout De Guia
cor. Tomas Morato,
Quezon City

Cartoon's representation of women's issues

JESS Abrera's editorial cartoon has become really spiteful of women on the occasion of Women's Day. Last March 9, his cartoon depicted a fiendish woman as an *aswang* sticking out her tongue at a pregnant woman and her family. The *aswang* was, of course, properly identified as Abrera's pet demons: contraception and abortion.

But Abrera's portrayal of women's reproductive realities is completely false. Sure, pregnancy and motherhood are a state desired by many women—but certainly not by all and not all of the time. As the health surveys say, women desire three of their four pregnancies and over 900,000 women need contraceptives for health reasons. Close to half a million women risk life and lifelong complications by having an induced abortion every year, despite the punitive law and stigma.

The number of women dying from the complications of pregnancy and childbirth is tragic—3,000 to 4,000 a year, 99 percent of them poor. For everyone who dies, three women survive but with serious disability.

Contraceptives are one way of averting these needless deaths and disability. And safe abortion, too, in countries where it is legal.

Yet, Abrera would rather demonize millions of women using these life-saving measures rather than humanize his Church. Like the Inquisition of the dark ages, he would rather condemn women to die, oblivious of the intricate connection between women's health and rights and the well being of families and society. But of course, Abrera can afford to be irresponsible with his cartoons—he never gets pregnant!

—JUNICE L. D. MELGAR,
executive director,
Linangan ng Kababaihan Inc. (Likhaan),
92 Times St., West Triangle Homes, QC

* * *

HOW can the INQUIRER allow the editorial cartoon to constantly draw a misguided and utterly miseducated view of contraception, equating it to abortion?

There is no doubt in my mind that educating individuals, not just parents, of their reproductive choices can in fact decrease the number of illegal abortions that are happening in the country. A person has the right to be informed of safe and reliable methods to take charge of his or her reproductive future.

We cannot, and should not live in the dark.

—LYRA D. RAKUSIN,
lyring@hotmail.com

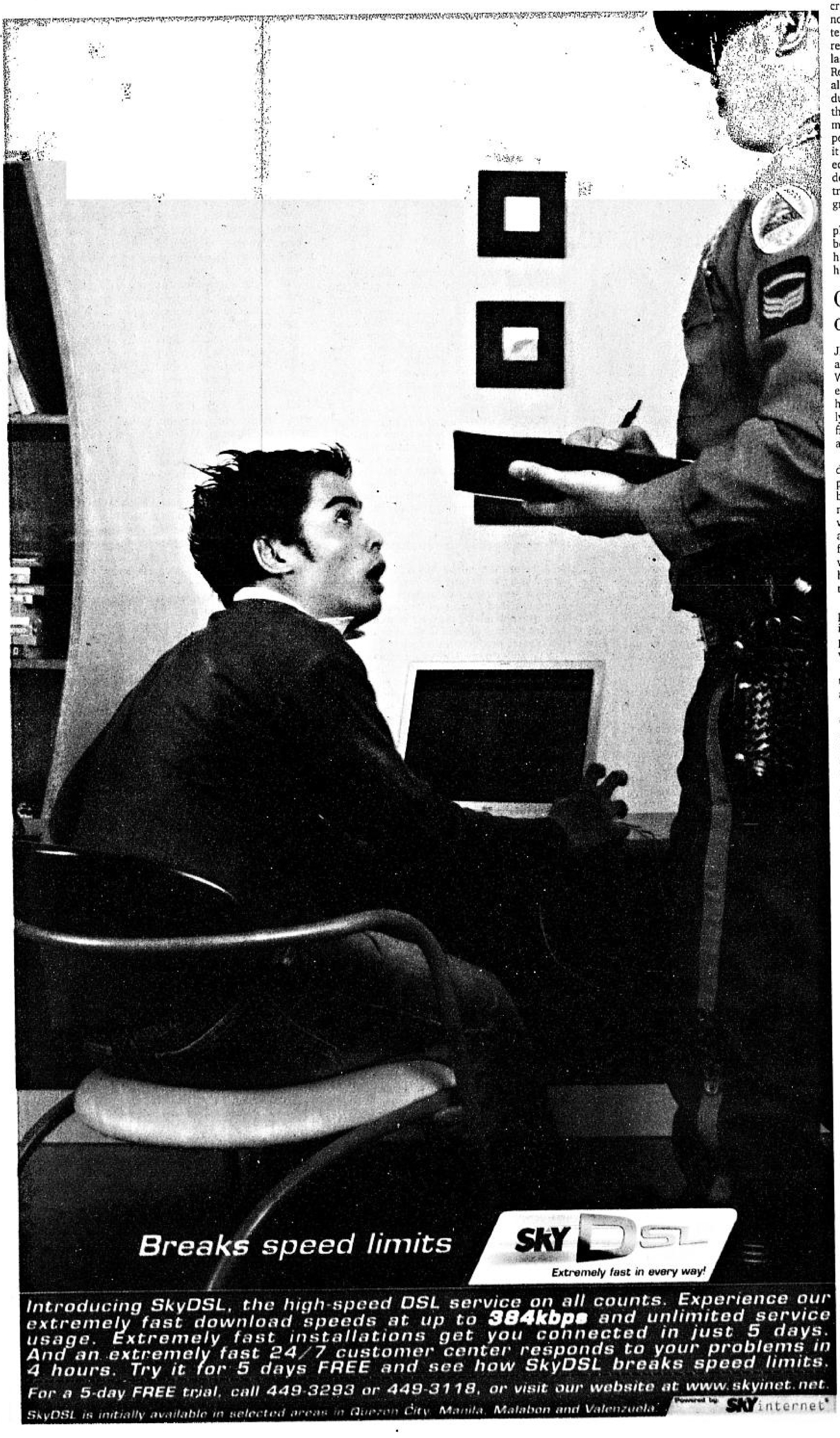
* * *

THE RECENT editorial cartoon of Jess Abrera (PDI, 03/09/04) on the threats of abortion and contraception to the family is commendably brave. It serves as a balance to the pro-contraception articles of Rina Jimenez-David.

While I do not see the Church figure in Abrera's cartoon, I would normally read David's attacks on the Church's stand on contraception. I see Abrera's cartoon as an artist's rendition of his observations on the effects of contraception on the integrity and sacredness of the family, without implicating the Church in it. On the other hand, I see David's articles on contraception as an attack to her own family, i.e., the Church she professes to belong to.

From the human point of view, I see David's articles attacking her own Church as unbecoming of an educated woman. On the other hand, I see Abrera's cartoons as the INQUIRER's way of showing its commitment to having not just balanced news but balanced views as well. I stand by Abrera's convictions.

—OLIVER M. TUAZON,
omtuazon@up.edu.ph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Duterte pays reb's hospital bills

DAVAO CITY—The ejection by communist rebels of campaigning supporters of his local party, Hugpong sa Katawhang Lungsod, in Paquibato District on Saturday obviously failed to anger Mayor Rodrigo Duterte.

On Monday afternoon, he shelled out more than P100,000 to settle the medical bills of a suspected New People's Army (NPA) guerrilla injured during a Feb. 17 encounter in Compostela Valley.

After Duterte paid the bills incurred by Marvin Luis, 37, the suspected rebel was immediately discharged from the government-run Davao Medical Center.

When he was brought here for bullet wounds on Feb. 17, Luis was already dying.

Ariel Casilao of the militant group Karapatan praised Duterte for the "humanitarian act" and for not being prejudicial to a rebel combatant.

Duterte himself said he did it out of humanitarian consideration.

The tough-talking executive said he condemns the rebels' armed struggle but he supports their cause.

In another interview, Duterte said he would not give in to the rebels' demand for campaign fees.

"You will have to kill me for I will not pay. Never," Duterte said.

He said there was no legal basis for paying the fees.

Duterte said he can give food and medicines to the rebels, but not money.

On Saturday, rebels forcibly drove away Hugpong's campaigners in Paquibato, one of their known lairs in Southern Mindanao.

Wendel Avisado, Hugpong secretary general, told reporters here that their supporters were serving as an advance team for the party's candidates when a group of NPA rebels stopped them from entering Paquibato proper.

Hugpong candidates were scheduled to conduct a rally in at least three villages in the district on Saturday but it was not immediately known whether Duterte was with them.

Avisado said the rebels asked their supporters to get out of the area because the party has not paid permit to campaign fees yet. *Dennis Jay C. Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Bishop asks mayor to let radio stations go on air

CAUAYAN CITY—Isabela Bishop Sergio Utleg appealed to Mayor Caesar Dy to immediately reopen dzNC-Bombo Radyo and its sister station, dwIT-FM, to enable the Church to reach out to its parishioners and voters in the province.

Utleg's plea was contained in a pastoral letter read in Masses here last Sunday.

Utleg said Bombo Radyo has been known to be critical of the government, military, police, business groups, nongovernment organizations and even the clergy.

"Certain sectors of the government obviously do not want the media or anybody for that matter to question their actions and expose their anomalies. The closure of Bombo Radyo is a gross curtailment of freedom of speech and unhampered access to information," he said.

Utleg asked the Catholic faithful to include in their prayers the opening of the radio stations.

The city government closed the stations for the non-renewal of their business permits.

But Bombo Radyo officials sued the city government before the Commission on Elections for supposedly violating election laws when they closed the stations on Feb. 17.

They said the city government violated a rule that no business franchises or permits should be revoked within the election period.

The Comelec on March 23 ordered a status quo that paved the way for the resumption of operations of the stations. But the city government questioned the Comelec's authority to rule on the issue and again closed the stations.

Utleg said since the closure of the stations in February, Isabela residents have been deprived of listening to the live broadcast of Sunday Masses and some religious programs through Bombo Radyo.

He said the stations' continued closure would stop their planned voters' education program and a candidates' forum.

Utleg also said their plan to air the Church-sponsored quick count results after the elections would not push through due to the continued closure of the stations.

Utleg said he studied the issue and was "convinced that Bombo Radyo complied with all the requirements." He said the city government's arguments in closing the stations were "flimsy, capricious and malicious."

Dy, however, said he did not abuse his authority in closing the stations. He said company officials failed to renew their business permits.

He said Utleg earlier asked him to re-open the radio stations. The mayor said he gave the bishop documents to prove that his action was legal.

"I gave him (Utleg) complete documents to prove that the closure was not unlawful. I know he was given enough information if he read enough the documents. I am surprised, though, with this recent pastoral letter," Dy said. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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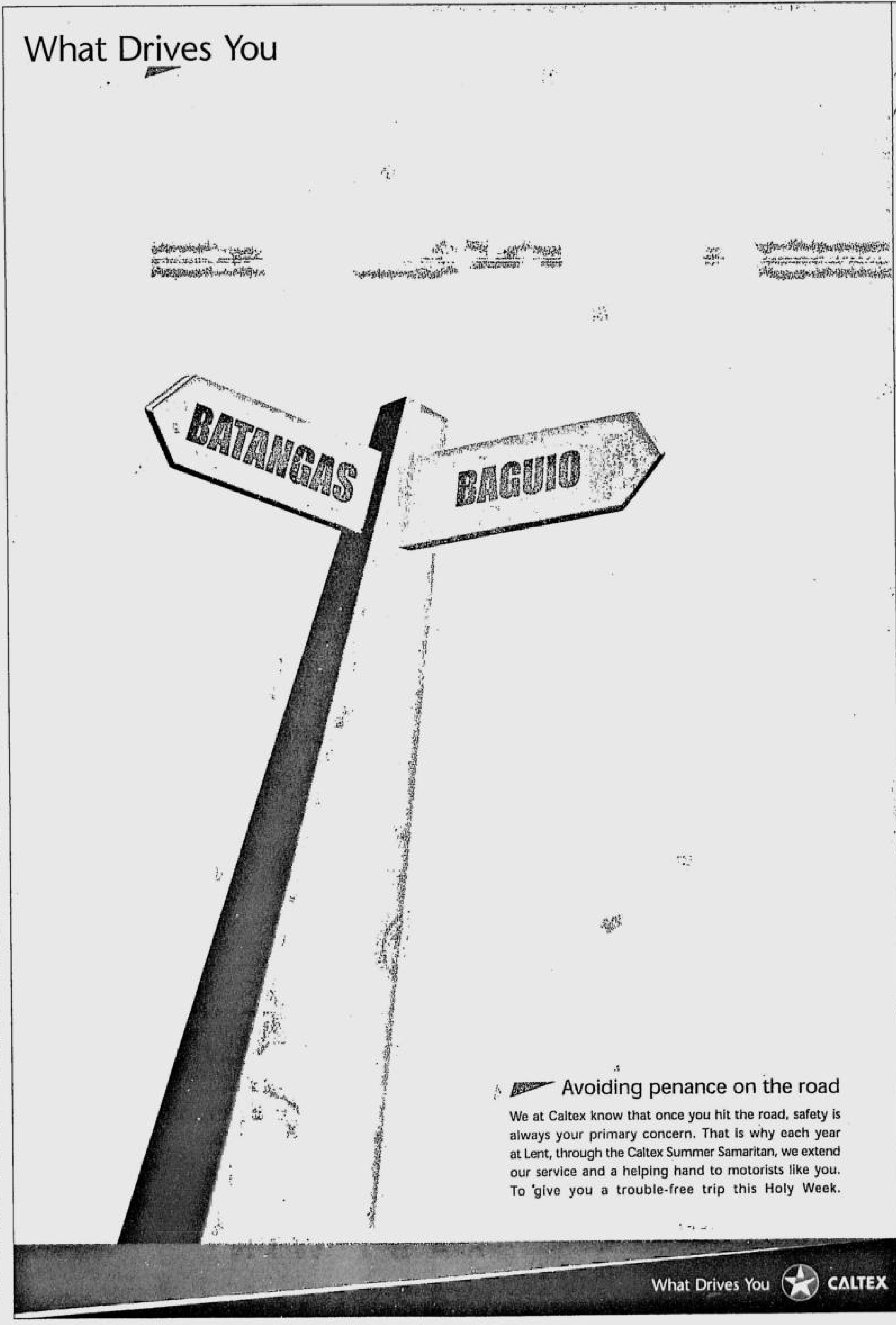

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OFW murdered in Saudi

LIBUNGAN, North Cotabato—Poverty drove her away to a country where she hoped her life would never be cruel again.

Like a typical Overseas Filipino Worker in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, she worked overtime to fulfill her dreams of alleviating her family's plight.

Now Nelsa Villarta, 36, would never dream again.

Her life was violently ended by a still unidentified suspect in Riyadh.

On March 22, Nelsa of Barangay Malengen here went missing as her birthday neared. Her disappearance was reported to authorities by a hometown friend who also works in Riyadh.

Five days later, the Philippine Embassy told her family that Nelsa's decomposing body had been found. Her legs were cut off.

Rex, 37, Nelsa's husband, said when they heard that his wife went missing, they repeatedly tried to contact her employer, Mohammad Abdullah Al Hamed.

"(But) no one was answering the telephone," he said between sobs.

Nelsa, breadwinner and eldest among her 12 siblings, previously worked in Hong Kong but decided to go to Riyadh because of bigger pay.

Nelsa promised that she would only work in Riyadh for a few years to save some capital to start a small business apart from building her own house.

"All she wanted was to uplift the family's living condition," Rex said.

So even if she was already married, Nelsa never forgot her family.

Her father, Paterno, remembers her as a decent, patient and principled person.

"She was well-respected in the community and was always ready to lend a helping hand to others," Paterno said of the days her daughter was serving as president of the village women's organization.

Elizabeth, 57, Nelsea's mother, wept as she holds her daughter's picture.

"That's the picture she gave to her friend. I could not see her anymore. She was a responsible daughter," she said.

Donald, Nelsa's eldest child, refuses to accept her mother's fate.

He kept on telling his classmates that his mother is well and that she would be home soon from Riyadh.

Rex said it is still not clear who killed his wife but that they wanted swift justice. *Rosa-May V. de Guzman, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

SEPARATISTS
Guerrillas of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front stand in formation during a visit of Malaysian ceasefire observers at an MILF camp. REUTERS

Poachers haul giant clams at UP marine lab

BOLINAO, Pangasinan—More giant clams (*Tridacna gigas*) being conserved and protected here by the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute laboratory were lost to poachers.

Dr. Suzanne Mingoa-Licuanan, UPMSI's giant clam project leader, said 10 shells of broodstock clams between six and 13 years old were found at the UPMSI giant clam nursery near the Silaki Island here.

"It appeared that the meat of the clams were taken and the shells were dumped at random in the ocean nursery," Licuanan said.

She asked Bolinao Mayor Jesus Celeste to investigate a report that a resident from Barangay Luciente I here was supplying giant clam meat to another village.

"I suspect that he is among those who are (stealing) our clams in Silaki. I implore you to at least investigate this angle. Perhaps a visit to his (house) by the police will be enough to intimidate him," Licuanan told Celeste in a letter.

Poaching has always hounded the giant clam conservation project of the UPMSI.

In May last year, 27 mature clams at the institute's ocean nursery were stolen. Last December, 67 giant clams were also stolen from the Hundred Islands National Park (HINP) near the Quezon Island. The clams were taken to the Cuenco Island where the meat was harvested.

Giant clam ocean nurseries tend to attract fish and later become nursery grounds for different species of edible fish, said Licuanan.

"Sad to say, the culprits who stole the clams did not realize this important contribution of the species to the marine environment," she said.

Harvesting of giant clams or even possession of its shells violates Republic Act No. 9147 or the wildlife protection and conservation act.

Tridacna gigas, the largest of the giant clam species, can grow up to 1.2 meters (four feet) in diameter. Once it settles into a place, it stays there permanently for its life.

More than 10,000 giant clams have been introduced at the HINP through the joint restoration project of the UPMSI, which reared the clams, and the Philippine Tourism Authority. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

100 cops, soldiers to be sent to Boracay

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Some 100 policemen and soldiers will be sent to the island resort of Boracay this summer, twice the number of the existing security force there.

But the Department of Tourism in Western Visayas said the deployment should not be a cause for alarm.

"It's a reiteration of a pronouncement of the PNP (Philippine National Police), the usual augmentation of security force in Boracay during (the) peak tourist season," said regional tourism director Edwin Trompeta.

Tourism Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan has announced that a composite force of two battalions, with 100 officers and uniformed personnel from the PNP and the Armed Forces of the Philippines, would be deployed to Boracay this summer to ensure the safety and security of tourists.

The additional security force, dubbed "Task Force Bocaray," reinforces the 50-member Boracay Special Protection Unit on the island.

Members of the task force would be fielded throughout the town of Malay, including the Caticlan jetty port, the jump-off point to the island, and Boracay's three barangays—Manoc-manoc, Balabag and Yapak. Two bomb and drug-sniffing dogs will accompany them.

Trompeta said the additional security men in Boracay are not going to move around in fatigues, conspicuous long firearms and in a manner that will scare foreign tourists.

They will be in shorts and T-shirts or resort get-up, he said.

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
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The making of a woman of the century

By Maurice Malanes
Baguio City

SHE climbed mountains, braved falling rocks along dangerous dirt roads, walked through slippery hanging bridges, and crossed rivers with leeches.

She went through all these and other harrowing experiences because of a passion: medical research. Together with a noted physician, she painstakingly looked into the Cordillera rural folk's health woes, such as goiter, intestinal parasites, pesticide-related deaths and ailments, among other things.

On March 16, Katherine V. Bersamira, 56, a math and science professor-turned-medical health researcher, was recognized by the National Academy of Science and Technology as one of 129 Filipino women of the century (1900-2000) in the field of health sciences.

Bersamira's passion for health research brought her to remote villages, such as Gaddang in Kapangan, Benguet, where 64 percent of the people were afflicted with goiter.

Goiter, an enlargement of the thyroid glands, is caused by lack of iodine. The thyroid glands need iodine to function well in helping metabolism and in activating the brain.

No fun

"Medical research is no fun," Bersamira said. "With the Cordillera's difficult terrain, we had to walk a lot simply because there were no available vehicles and walking was the only way to move around and do our research."

For almost half of her lifetime, Bersamira and her physician partner quietly did more than 120 research studies. Some government health programs and policies were based on these studies.

For example, Bersamira's research on the impact of iodine capsules on the academic performance of schoolchildren in Kapangan prompted the health department to rethink its iodine capsule distribution program, which, at first, focused only on reproductive women aged 15 and above.

The research proved that the fight against iodine deficiency must also include all those below 15.

From the research results, Bersamira's research partner, Dr. Charles Cheng of the Baguio Filipino-Chinese General Hospital, also based his medical treatment and prevention of diseases, which were wreaking havoc on the lives of poor Igorot folk.

Award-winning

A book about the effects of pesticides on Benguet farmers' health she co-authored with Cheng did not only win the Dr. Raul Rivas Memorial Award for Rural Medicine and Public health in 1987. The book is now a handy reference by the Department of Agriculture when it trains and educates Igorot farmers about pesticide hazards.

Other medical studies Bersamira embarked with Cheng included rural folk's views about and attitudes toward family planning, intestinal parasitic infestation and its effects on schoolchildren's class performance, diseases that acupuncture can treat, breastfeeding and mothers and babies' health, drug abuse, degree of boxers' injury by examining their urine, women's health, safe motherhood and many more.

Depressed communities

Ninety-one of the medical studies were published in various medical journals, including publications of the World Health Organization, and 30 reaped awards from prestigious medical organizations, mainly because of their impact on public health in depressed communities.

Whatever cash awards that went with the usual plaques, Bersamira and her partner would plow them back to another research with the overall goal of helping uplift the health and total well-being of their research subjects and other people with the same health woes.

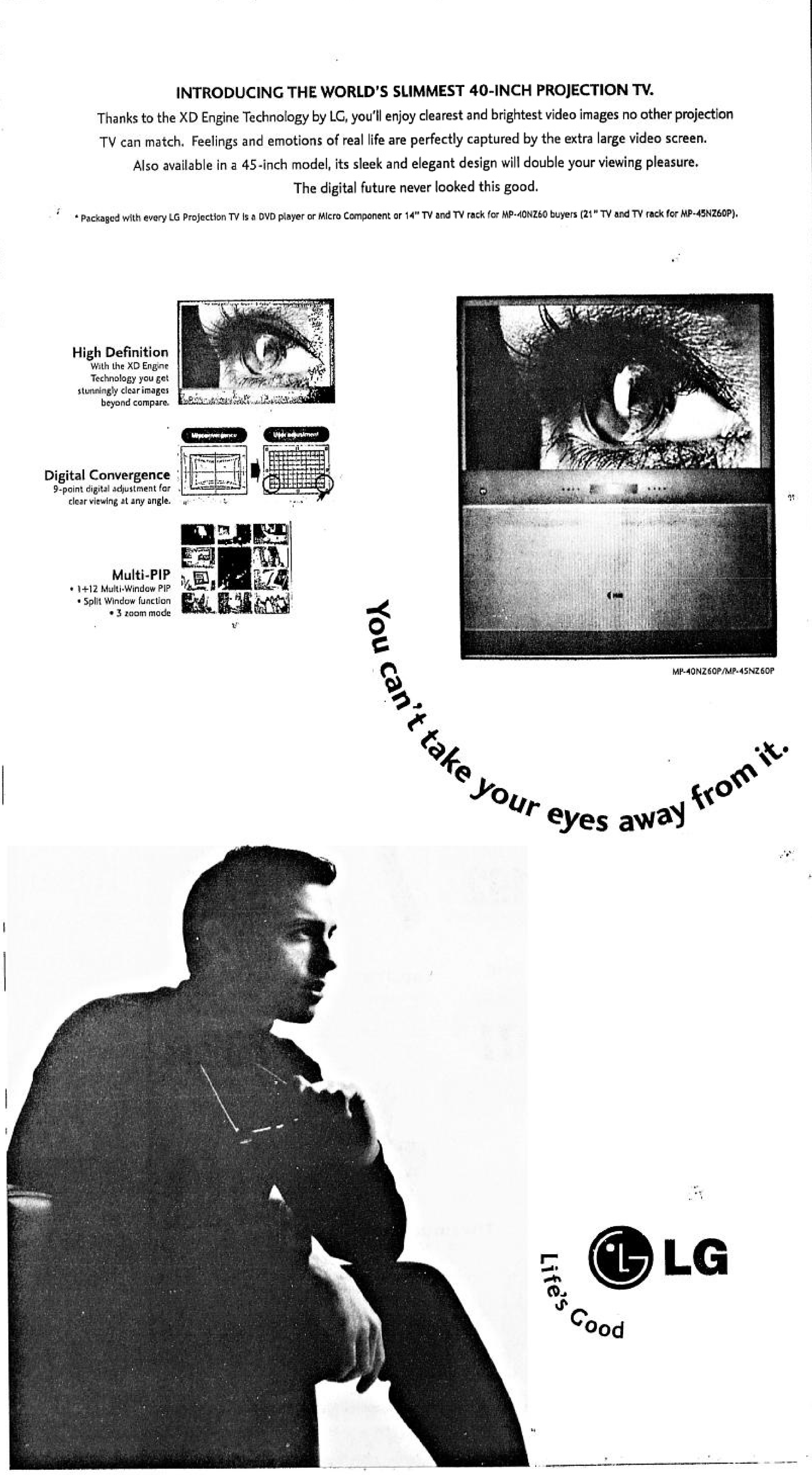
As part of her recognition, a two-page summary of Bersamira's life, passion and pioneering works now forms part of the NAST's 259-page newly published book, "A Century of Women in Health Sciences," which also features 128 other "Filipino women trailblazers."

In its search, which began in 1998, the NAST, then headed by Dr. Conrado Dayrit, looked into the various facets of the "modern, evolving Filipino woman" as "scientist, inventor, pioneer, thinker, advocate, wife and mother."

Magnanimous heart

"Bersamira embodies all these various facets (put forward by the NAST), but she is no superwoman. She is as ordinary as any of us but she did her profession and vocation in an extraordinary way," said Aida Idio, former

THE MAKING/ A20



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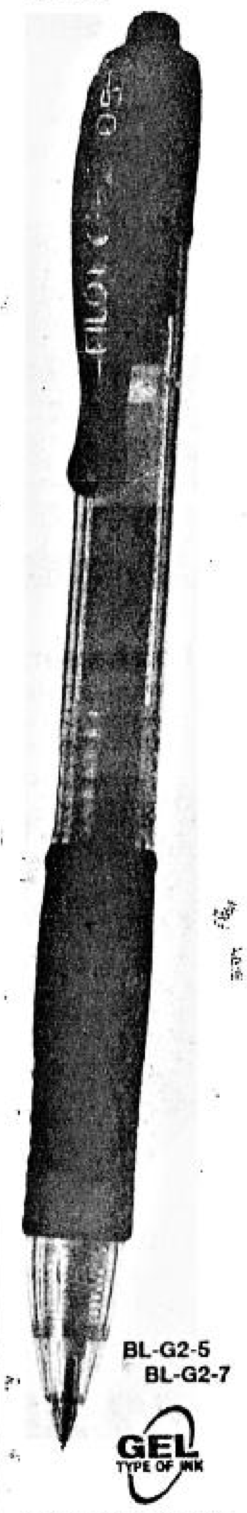

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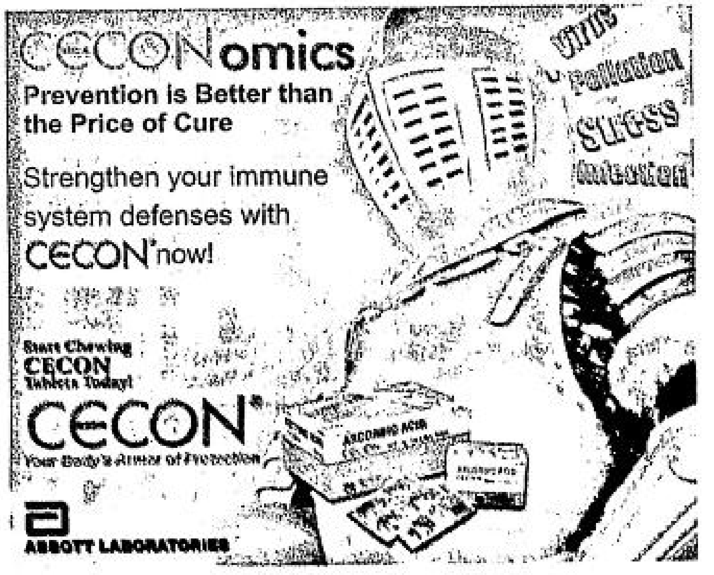
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By Elizabeth Lolarga
Contributor

THE PIANIST for whom the list of superlative adjectives is near to running out has no regimen for taking care of her precious, powerful hands.

"By cutting onions," Cecile Licad, 42, joked when asked how she cares for her hands, during a press conference at the Café by the Ruins on Friday, the eve of her second performance in Baguio City after 16 years.

She handles hot and cold objects unmindfully, but what she does is to practice every day the way ordinary people go to their nine-to-five jobs.

Film director Marilou Diaz Abaya, her bosom buddy, said, "Cecile's hands are not insured because she doesn't play with her fingers. She plays with her soul."

Licad, who played a program of Schumann, Oliver Knussen, Liszt, Beethoven and Chopin on Saturday at the CAP-Camp John Hay Cultural Center to raise funds for the Share a Joy Foundation, repeated the same selections she played at her recent recital in Paris.

To her, it's not about following a composer's instructions to the letter, thinking about the timing or planning to be effective for the sake of being effective. It is more of "play(ing) the same piece differently because every day is different. You feel different from now to later."

Besides, she added, "who knows what the original composer intended?"

Her playing has often been described as passionately possessed, and she agreed. "Generally, I am happiest at the piano when I am lost in the music."

Full house

Abaya said Licad was not a mere note reader or interpreter but "a co-creator who stokes the music of the masters to life in the 21st century."

LICAD E.V. ESPIRITU

Playing to a full house, Licad was a picture of sensual elegance in a black haltered top and a billowing black skirt by Tadashi from Saks Fifth Avenue in New York. The Baguio audience gave her rounds of standing ovation which she acknowledged with three encores: "Inday" and "Mayon Concerto" by her granduncle Francisco Buencamino Sr. and "Le Banjo" by Louis Moreau Gottschalk.

This woman, who "will probably be playing until I'm 80," sometimes imagines pain to enrich her art. "Bear the pain. It has always been there. I'm masochistic. I make the pain."

The hurt she returns to is the childhood she never had.

'Altar of art'

Abaya said the Licad family, parents Rosario and Jesus in particular, sacrificed their lives "on the altar of art." Licad recalled being shook awake by her father early in the morning so she could rehearse. "It's from the bed to the piano."

Classmates were not allowed at home because the time had again to be devoted to practice.

She could not pinpoint the next child prodigy after her although she said she had seen talents "and then they give up. You must have something inside you. When I was small, I realized it was my destiny. It never occurred to me that I might give up. It has always been go, go, go."

Feel-good rituals

Although she admitted that hers could be a lonely life, she has some rituals for feeling good before a performance. She would sometimes shop or indulge in gossip. "Sometimes a little mistake or failure inspires me. I feel like I could've done something else, and yet it turns out fine. My proudest moment? When I play with the greatest orchestras in the world. Not too many people have done that."

She hopes someday to be able to conduct master classes for performing musicians. She qualified that this class for a select group is not meant to show off to an audience. Neither would she mind a special prize in her name for young artists.

Retirement in the Philippines is too far from her mind, but she makes it a point to hold homecoming concerts at least twice a year. Although a New York resident, she declared, "I am a Filipino and will always be a Filipino."

Licad will be heard again at seven tonight at the Pasig Museum on Plaza Rizal, Pasig City (contact 0918-7376901 for tickets), and April 2 at 8 p.m. at the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

The making of a woman of the century

From page A19

student of Bersamira and now principal of the Saint Louis University Laboratory Elementary School. "All she has is a magnanimous heart."

On her recognition, Bersamira said she was both happy and sad. "I'm happy because I can't believe there is such an award and recognition for women. But I'm sad because from this century, only 129 of us were identified and recognized," she told a recent testimonial dinner hosted by Cheng.

With many promising years ahead of her, Bersamira said she would not rest on her laurels but would continue on the least traveled path of medical research.

Childhood dream

"I'm willing to help aspiring young people who wish to go into medical researches that can benefit their own communities," said the century woman, who, as a child dreamed of becoming a doctor but took up education instead because her parents could not afford a medical course.

Bersamira also embodies hope for this country, whose medical health professionals, including physicians, are leaving en masse to serve as caregivers and nurses abroad, said Cheng.

"Given our situation, we need all the professionals to rebuild our nation," he said, as he wished there would be more Bersamiras among Filipinos.

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Summer adventure kills 9-year-old boy

By Luige del Puerto

WHILE many children learn some kind of sport or engage in leisurely activities during the summer, 9-year-old Franklin Pedrosa's idea of an off-school adventure was going with friends to a dumpsite.

The adventure, however, killed the boy when he was run over by a 10-wheeled garbage truck in Pasig City Monday morning.

Home alone

According to his mother, Meladina, she left Franklin alone at home in Mangga One, Nagpayong, Barangay Pinagbuhatan, Pasig, on Monday morning.

She explained that, she had to attend the kindergarten graduation of his younger sister, Princess.

After she and Princess left, some friends reportedly called Franklin and invited him to go with them to the nearby Nagpayong dumpsite.

Scavengers

Later, the boy was seen scavenging at the garbage dump with about 12 other children, mostly his age.

Scavengers, among them children, regularly scout the Nagpayong dump site, the police said.

At about 10:30 a.m., Henry Pueyo, 32, arrived driving a 10-wheeled truck filled with refuse.

Suddenly, the children started running along the truck and climbing on.

Franklin also tried to clamber on the right side by clinging on a side ladder.

However, he lost his grip and fell. The momentum of the fall sent him rolling under the truck, which ran over him.

Pueyo rushed the child to the Pasig City General Hospital, where he was declared dead on arrival.

Fatal injury

Franklin had sustained a fatal head injury, said P01 Jerven Galvez.

The boy's mother told the INQUIRER in a phone interview that Franklin was not supposed to be at the dumpsite.

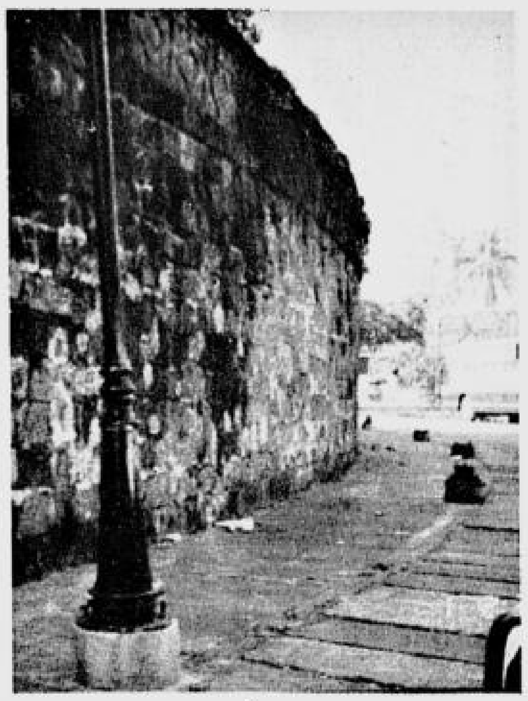
Meladina said her son was not a scavenger. "His friends only invited him there."

Franklin also did not need to scavenge to earn money. Meladina worked as a salesclerk while his father, Francisco, worked as an air-condition technician. Francisco was in Cebu when the incident happened.

End of classes

"Classes have already ended, so he was most likely just spending time there with other kids," police officer Galvez said.

Pueyo is currently in jail facing a charge of reckless imprudence resulting in homicide.



GOING ... GOING ...
One by one, the lampposts around historic Paco Park are disappearing to the lament of residents, who miss the once well-lighted surroundings. The park is just across a Bureau of Fire station and a stone's throw away from the Western Police District headquarters.

Angat dam water level precarious

By Tina Santos

AN OFFICIAL of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) yesterday reiterated the government's appeal to Metro Manila residents to exert more effort in saving water as the Angat Dam's level nears its critical level.

"Double your efforts in conserving water. This is still the best way to avert our looming water problem," MWSS deputy administrator Macra Cruz advised the public.

As of yesterday noon, water elevation at the dam in Bulacan was measured at 183.66 meters.

According to an official of the Bulacan Provincial Disaster Coordinating Office (PDCO), the elevation at the water reservoir dropped from 184.46 meters to 184.04 meters from Sunday to Monday alone.

Critical in a week

At this rate, the official warned, the water level might reach the critical level of 180 meters in less than seven days.

PDCO records showed the water elevation at the dam, the primary source of potable water of the metropolis, had dropped by 8.31 meters in the last 29 days.

On March 1, the PDOC recorded 192.35 meters compared with the 184.04 meters recorded on Monday morning.

Officials noted that water elevation recedes faster in March, one of the country's hottest months.

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Kidnap suspect turns witness

By Tarra Quismundo

A CONFESSED member of the Moro Islamic Liberation who was arrested for the kidnapping of a bank official in Cagayan de Oro City more than three years ago has just turned into a state witness.

Rucman Sultan, one of seven men tagged in the kidnapping of Enrique Pelaez in November 2000, has been discharged from the roll of the accused who face charges of kidnapping for ransom with serious illegal detention, a heinous crime.

Pelaez is the son of former Vice President Emmanuel Pelaez. He escaped his kidnappers on Jan. 13, 2001, 52 days after being kept in tight watch in an apartment unit in a subdivision in Iligan City.

Through an order from Judge Lucia Purugganan of the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 54, Sultan would no longer stand trial as a defendant, and instead give his testimony on the side of the prosecution.

Public prosecutors requested for Sultan's discharge from the defense side in September last year.

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Checkpoint cop slain in shootout

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

THE PERILS of the job caught up with a Caloocan City policeman who was shot dead Monday afternoon.

PO2 Restituto Soria, 33, of the Caloocan City Police Mobile and Bike Patrol Unit died of a gunshot wound in the chest.

One of the suspects, Venus Ybot, 29, was also wounded. His cohort, a certain Toto Salonga, escaped.

At about 3:45 p.m., Soria and PO2 Melchor Gregorio were on routine patrol along C4 Road in Caloocan City when they spotted two men on board a black motorcycle speeding along Dagat-Dagatan Avenue toward Letre Road.

Suspicious, the policemen tried to flag down the two men, later identified as Ybot and Salonga, but instead of stopping, the two men sped off toward Lapu-Lapu Avenue.

Soria and Gregorio gave chase and caught up with the suspects at the corner Star Fish Alley, Malabon City.

But as the policemen were approaching them, the suspects started firing, hitting Soria in his chest.

Gregorio fired back but Ybot and Salonga managed to escape by getting on separate tricycles.

Bystanders brought Soria to the Tondo Medical Center.

At the hospital, investigators chanced upon Ybot, who was also undergoing treatment for gunshot wounds he sustained during the brief firefight with the police.

Soria died while undergoing treatment.

Police are still looking for Salonga, who is also the subject of several arrest warrants, a policeman from the District Police Intelligence Unit told the INQUIRER.

Man dies, two hurt in free fall

By Leila B. Salaverria

A 29-YEAR-OLD Filipino-Chinese man fell from the 39th floor of a building in Manila yesterday and landed on two other men.

Edwin Dexter Ong, a resident of the Robinson's Tower I along Padre Faura Street, was seen by security guards walking along the roof deck of the building at about 9:20 a.m., minutes before he fell.

The guards did not tell Ong to leave the roof deck because he was a resident, police said.

P03 Renato Garay said Ong landed on the roof of the bathroom of the Faura Eatery. Ong fell through the roof of the eatery and landed on two men in the toilet.

Garay identified the two men as Crispin Ombed and Jimmy Villena, both employees of the Cowboy Grill in Malate who had decided to stop there for breakfast.

Villena's neck was fractured, while Ombed suffered a broken arm.

Homicide investigators who spoke with Ong's parents said Ong had a fight with his father the previous day.

Makati helpers get medical aide

By Margaux Ortiz

IN MAKATI City, even house helpers get health and medical assistance from the local government.

And there is only one simple requirement: the helper must present his or her voter's ID to qualify.

But any voter's ID will not do. One should be a voter in Makati City for a helper to be included in the giving out of benefits.

Big discounts

Mayor Jejomar Binay yesterday announced that 7,483 domestic helpers employed by Makati residents have received yellow cards from the city government from 1986 to October 2003.

The yellow cards allow them to avail of hospitalization and medical care at the Makati Medical Center and Ospital ng Makati at greatly discounted rates.

Binay gave the example of Celestino Peralta, a resident of East Rembo, who underwent neuro-surgery at the MMC.

Peralta's bill amounted to P1.7 million, but with his yellow card, he only had to pay the hospital P3,000, the mayor said.

Binay said domestic helpers were among the identified recipients of the yellow card program, which covers Makati residents with monthly incomes below P10,000, city employees including public school teachers, policemen and firemen and senior citizens.

More for basic needs

"By easing the financial burden of the beneficiaries, they are allowed to spend more for basic needs," Binay said in a statement.

He said benefits under the yellow card include surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics, medicine, opthalmology, dermatology and orthopedics at the MMC and Osmak.

Binay said the beneficiaries were grouped according to incomes and were made to pay corresponding minimal fees.

Robber ends working coed's dream

From page A24

The young Dawang's father, Danilo, worked as a barangay kagawad in their hometown of Dasmariñas, Cavite. Her mother, Carmelita, was a housewife.

Dawang was the only daughter and the third in a brood of four.

Myrna also said her 19-year-old niece, who was supposed to turn 20 in September, also chose to be a working student even if her studies were already being shouldered by relatives.

"She hated to be idle," the aunt said, who added that her young niece had been very industrious in her studies even when she was still a little girl.

The place where Dawang was attacked as a few blocks away from the Western Police District headquarters and the WPD's Station 5 on UN Avenue.

Teachers' hotline for May polls set

By Tarra Quismundo

FOR TEACHERS who would man the polling precincts and count the ballots on May 10, help may just be a phone call away.

The Manila Public School Teachers Association (MPSTA) is putting up a Teacher's Hotline, a 911 of sorts for teachers who would serve in the coming elections.

MPSTA president Benjie Valbuena said the hotline would be operational days leading up to and following the elections.

"We would be monitoring reports of harassment and bribery against the teachers, and we would provide assistance to them," said Valbuena in an interview.

Election-related violence, lack of election paraphernalia, and unruly voters are some of the problems that the MPSTA is anticipating to ensue this election season.

Some 11,000 public school teachers in Manila would once again serve as Comelec employees on May 10.

The votes of more than a million registered voters of the city is expected to be cast in around 90 public schools.

And the teachers would be administering these votes, closing the precincts, counting the ballots and completing the tally.

Valbuena said that teachers who would not work in polling precincts would man the hotline center.

The center has yet to be put up, as the MPSTA is still building up their funds.

But Valbuena said that there is no stopping the Teachers' Hotline, and it would be ready to answer calls of teachers and heed their appeals soon.

With the hotline, the MPSTA would be open to complaints from teachers on election-related concerns.

The MPSTA would then coordinate with the Commission on Elections and the Philippine National Police to respond to the reports of teachers.

Ex-Makati vice mayor hit by car thieves

FORMER Makati City vice mayor and councilor Roberto Brillante lost P170,000 worth of television equipment to thieves yesterday morning.

Brilliante, 55, who is now a television and radio broadcaster, lost a duffel bag inside his L300 van parked outside his house at 175 Kalayaan Avenue, West Rembo, Makati City.

The bag contained a television camera worth P95,000, a JVC mini DVD worth P55,000, and a stereo TV microphone worth P6,000.

Brilliante also told police he also lost his car stereo, hydraulic jack and cross range.

Police said Brilliante discovered his possessions were missing around 7:30 a.m.

Thieves forced open the van's sliding door and fled with the valuables, police added. *Margaux Ortiz*

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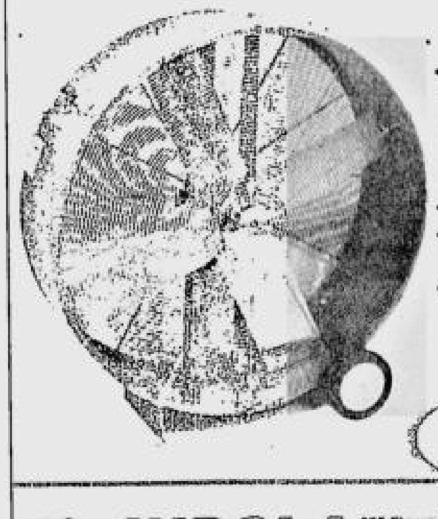

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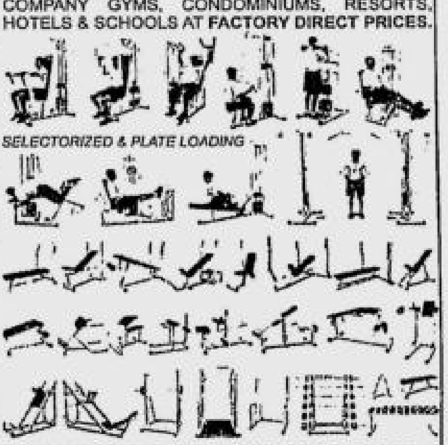

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ABC

Robber ends working coed's dream

By Leila B. Salaverria

DIANA Rose Dawang wanted to become a nurse, and then become president, all on her own. And to achieve those dreams, she tried to work herself through college.

On Monday night, however, a lone knife-wielding robber abruptly ended her life and her ambitions.

Dawang, 19, who was an incoming third year BS Nursing student at the Emilio Aguinaldo College, was waylaid a few meters from her boarding house along Gen. Luna Street in Ermita.

According to the police, she had just gotten off from working late at the Kentucky Fried Chicken branch on Ma. Orosa Street and was walking home at about 11:55 p.m. when a man tried to grab her bag.

The young woman resisted and engaged the suspect in a tug-of-war for her things.

Apparently desperate, the suspect pulled out a knife and started stabbing Dawang, who was hit twice in the left chest and four times in the left upper arm.

Although wounded, the victim managed to cry out for help and attracted several men on board a passing pedicab.

However, the suspect had fled and Dawang was lying bloodied on the sidewalk when help arrived.

Dawang was rushed to the Manila Medical Center, where she died a few hours later from her wounds.

Investigator SPO1 Raul Olavario said they found a black loafer shoe, which the suspect apparently lost while struggling with the victim.

Police later found the other half of the shoe and a pair of dirty white socks along Padre Faura Street.

Witnesses described the suspect as about 5'1 to 5'5' tall and chubby.

Myrna Dawang, the victim's aunt, yesterday told the INQUIRER that the incident ended her niece's dreams.

"*Ang lakas ng ambisyon n'ya sa buhay. Minsan sa kwentuhan sabi niya sa akin, huwag niyo ko pagtawanan. Balang araw titingalain niyo ako sa* Malacañang (She had big ambitions. During one of our conversations she said, 'Don't laugh at me. One day you will look up to me in Malacañang')," Myrna recalled her niece's words.

Myrna also said Dawang had big dreams of helping her family, even saying that they would not always be needy if she had her way.

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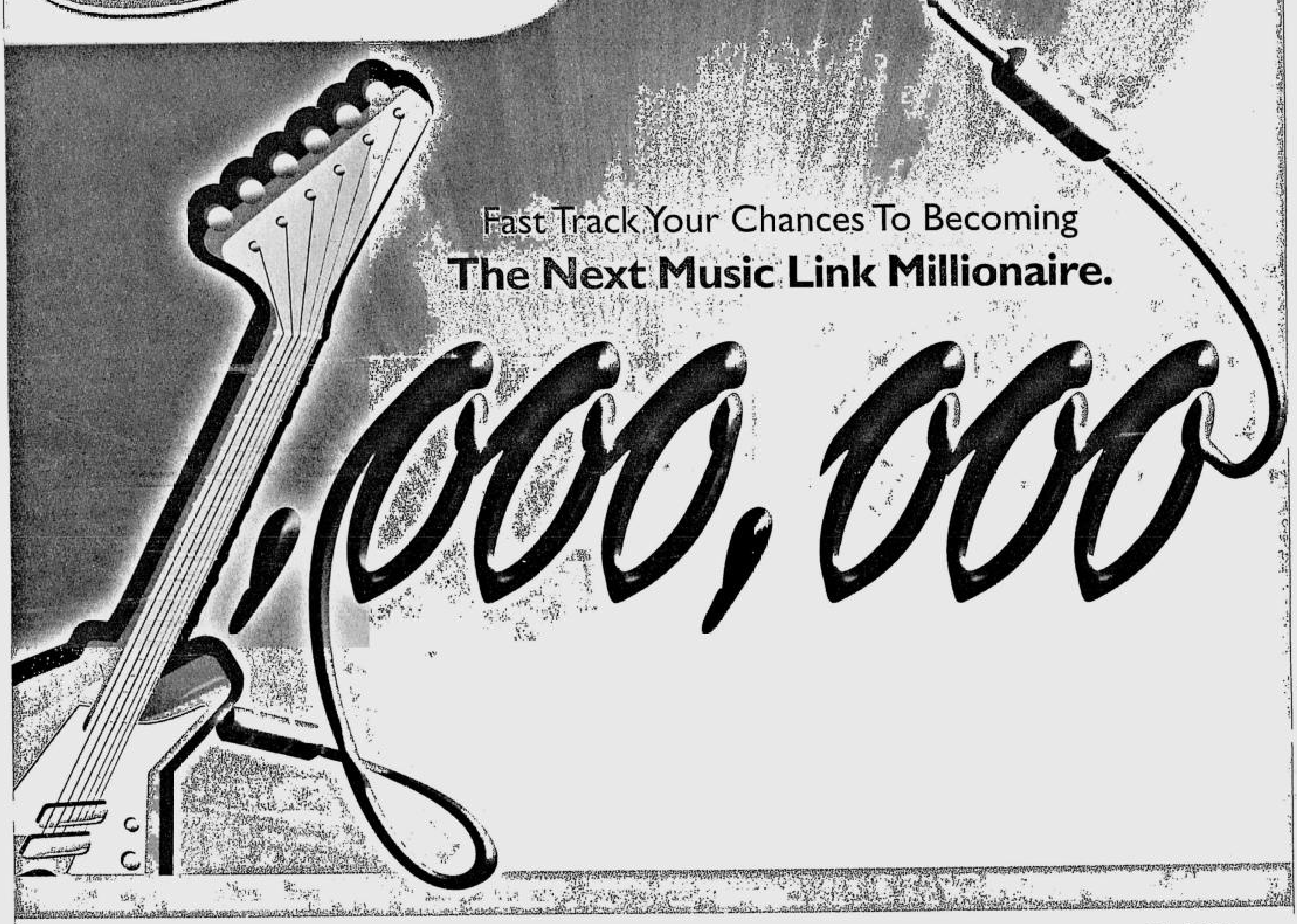
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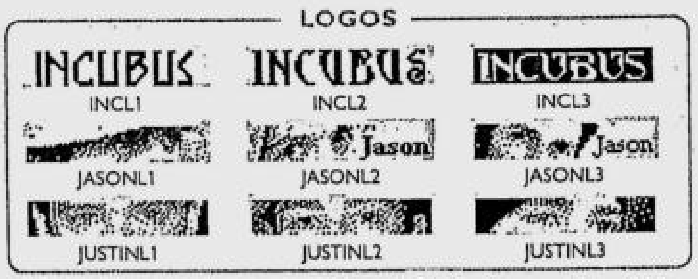

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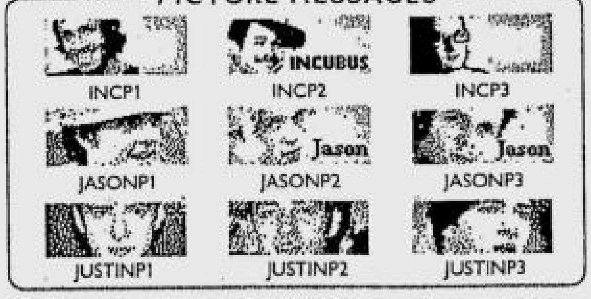

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RINGTONES	ARTIST	KEYWORD
Megalomaniac	INCUBUS	INC1
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Wish You Were Here	INCUBUS	INC3
You And I Both	JASON MRAZ	LUV34
I'll Do Anything	JASON MRAZ	LUV35
Remedy (I Wont Worry)	JASON MRAZ	LUV36
Señorita	JUSTIN T.	JT1
Like I Love You	JUSTIN T.	JT2

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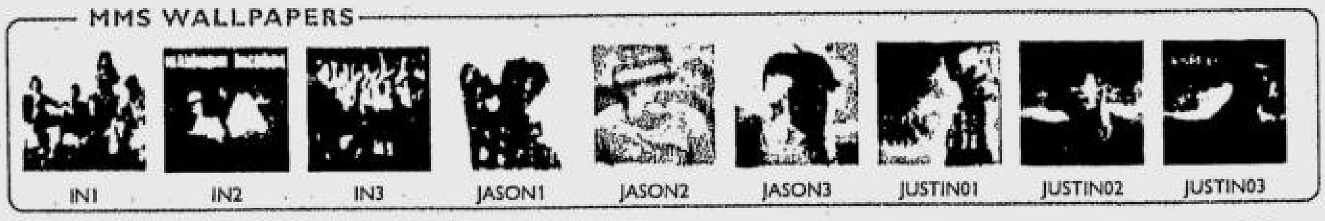

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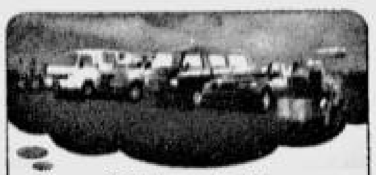

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SPORTS
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Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Mangulat

BASKETBALL: NBA - Pacers vs Bucks; 9 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports - Central division leader Indiana takes on overachieving Milwaukee.
NBA Greatest Games - Kings vs Suns, Game 7, 1981 Western Semifinals; 12 noon; Solar Sports - Kansas City and Phoenix engage in one of the more memorable playoff encounters.
US NCAA Regional Finals; 5 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.; Solar Sports - Another two Final Four slots are up for grabs.
BASEBALL: 2003 MLB American League Championship Series, Game 7 - Red Sox vs Yankees; 8:30 p.m. (r); ESPN - Catch this classic encounter between two bitter rivals.

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New-look Welcoat routs Blu Star

Oreta stars as Hapee five survives furious Montaña comeback

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WELCOAT Paints may have lost several former mainstays and its coach, but this hardly showed yesterday.

GAMES TOMORROW
(Makati Coliseum)
2 p.m.—Blustar vs Viva Mineral
4 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs Welcoat

Playing as if they've gained even more firepower, the Paint Masters demolished Blu Star Detergent, 76-60, to kick off their campaign in the PBL 2nd Unity Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

New recruits Chester Tolomia and Marvin Ortiguerra jelled with oldtimers Jojo Tangkay and Ariel Capus as they combined for 68 points in crushing the Detergent Makers.

In the second game, Emerson Oreta scored all his nine points in the final quarter, including six in the last three minutes, as defending champion Hapee Toothpaste escaped with a 68-61 victory over Montaña Pawnshop.

The Teeth Sparklers led comfortably for most of the second half until Montaña closed within 53-54 behind a full-court press with less than four minutes to go.

But Oreta, formerly of Sunkist, hit a triple, a layup and completed a fastbreak off a perfect pass by Eugene Tan to secure the decision for Hapee.

Tolomia and Ortiguerra, coming back to the league after a brief stint in the PBA, contributed 22 and 11 points, respectively, most of them early in the second half, where the Paint Masters posted several 18-point leads.

Capus and Tangkay chipped in 20 and 15 points, respectively, to complete a successful coaching debut for Caloy Garcia, who found himself at the helm of Welcoat when Leo Austria moved to Shell in the PBA last week.

"The first day of practice without coach Leo, I didn't even know how to run it, because I didn't know how the players would respond to me as a coach," said the 29-year-old Garcia, who last played for Shark Energy Drink two years ago.

"But I had a talk with coach Leo this morning and the players and management gave me the support I needed," added Garcia, whose old assignment under Austria was to scout the opposition.

Before losing Austria, Welcoat also parted ways with seven players, among them former national team mainstays James Yap and Marc Pingris and crack guard Paul Artadi.

Capus hit 3-of-3 while Tangkay made 2-of-5 from the three-point area while Tolomia and Ortiguerra muscled their way underneath, using their PBA experience to bully Blu Star bigmen Nino Canaleta and Allan Gamboa.

The scores:

First Game

WELCOAT 76—Tolomia 22, Capus 20, Tangkay 15, Ortiguerra 11, Aldeguer 4, Gaturnbato 4, Reyes 0, Uy 0, Guevarra 0, Coching 0, Mamaclay 0, Celo 0, Dulay 0.

BLU STAR 60—Dela Cuesta 12, Canaleta 10, Tagupa 8, Gamboa 7, Alfad 7, Victoria 4, Villamin 4, Mesina 2, Santos 2, Ferrer 2, Aquino 2, Menor 0, David 0.

Quarters: 13-13, 36-28, 59-43, 76-60.

Second Game

HAPEE 68—Napa 14, Moore 14, Macapagal 11, Oreta 9, Dualan 6, Juntilla 5, Omiping 3, Mercado 2, Tan 2, Mendoza 2, Dy 0.

MONTANA 61—Salvador 16, Junio 15, Magpayo 10, Najorda 6, Bonus 4, Vergara 4, Espiritu 4, Ilanga 0, Buenafe 0, Manigo 0, Guerrero 0, Tolentino 0.

Quarters: 20-13, 33-26, 47-40, 68-61.

CHRISTIAN Guevarra of Welcoat bungles a dunk off Nino Canaleta of Blu Star in the fourth quarter of their game yesterday. ROMY HOMILLADA

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Ginebra	3	5
Shell	3	5
FedEx	1	5
Sta. Lucia	1	6

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(Araneta Coliseum)
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SPORTSWATCH

Araullo targets triathlon crown

NATIONAL champion Sandra Araullo, toughened by six weeks of rigorous training in New Zealand, targets the women's crown in the 2004 Speedo Asian Triathlon Championship set on Saturday and Sunday at the Subic Bay Freeport. The 22-year-old Araullo, who topped the 2003 National Triathlon Championships, is the Philippines' best hope in getting its first Asian triathlon crown. Her preparation included swimming in icy water and biking or running in chilly weather. "When I got back (from New Zealand), I saw the big improvement that I had. But there is a lot of work to be done for the Asian Triathlon," said Araullo, a BS Physics graduate from UP. In the national championship in Guimaras, Araullo clinched both the Elite Open and Under-23 titles. National athletes Lakambini Alto and Kaye Lopez are doubtful participants as they have been concentrating on training for the cycling team, while Popo Nagtalon has joined the duathlon team. The other contenders are Ani Karina de Leon, who has also been training in New Zealand, veteran Mylene Jarina, and dark horse Anna Balagosa, who are both from Cebu. Araullo started training for triathlon just to manage her chronic asthma attacks. Her successful performances as a junior player in the swim-bike-run event, however, convinced Araullo to give it a serious try. *Trina Ibarle*

Slasher Cup championship round

A BANNER crowd is expected to witness Roligon Mega Cockpit's "Slasher Cup ng Masa 6-Cock Derby" 110-fight championship round today. From a total 147 entries, only 11 remained unbeaten with three wins each. The pacesetters are Jake Macasaet (Alabastro), Joe Mojeno (TDR), Jun Carpina (Sto. Niño 588), Erwin Diamante and Rey Briones (RB 2 Diamante) Gerry Perez (Gerry Nigel), Edwin Recio and Alan Tan (4M Hatawan Sal Roligon June 28), engineer Samonte (Don Bosco), Erwin Diamante (Gerona Cockpit) and Dax Guanzon (Darling Dahan 2). A prize of P1.5 million, which is guaranteed by Roligon owner Rolly Ligon, awaits the winners. For inquiries, contact 833-2275, 833-1638, 852-9774 and 852-9812 (look for Aubrey, Shirley or Tiling).

Salpukan sa LPC debry tonight

LEADING cockers and breeders of Batangas, Parañaque and Las Piñas are gunning for the championship of the "Salpukan sa LPC 3-Cock Derby" tonight at the Las Piñas Coliseum. The 50-fight program will be sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Today's hosts are veteran cockers Jun Musico and Eddie Jog. At stake is a guaranteed prize of P200,000 with a P6,600 entry fee. Entries will be accepted from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. today. For inquiries, contact 873-1040 and 09205609404 (look for Gerry or Julius). Last Saturday, Laguna breeder Pol Estrellado topped the "BRBL 5-Cock Derby" after his entry posted 4.5 points.

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BURLINGTON SPONSORSHIP
Burlington socks GM Rudy Tan (2nd from left) and PBA Commissioner Noli Eala recently signed a memorandum of agreement making Burlington, the official socks of the PBA, as the sponsor of the first PBA junior basketball clinic and the PBA Junior Summer League, which opens on April 18. Witnesses are Rowena Tolentino (left) and Norman Black, longtime Burlington endorser.

Dandan lone RP junior net survivor

WILD CARD Kyle Joshua Dandan emerged as the lone Filipino survivor after the first round in the boys' division of the 16th Mitsubishi Lancer International Junior Championships, dumping fellow wild card Laurence Magaway, 6-4, 6-4, yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Dandan, who saw action in the prestigious Orange Bowl Championships two years ago, will meet No. 8 Lachlan Ferguson of Australia, who drew a first-round bye.

Also seeing action today are top seed Karan Rastogi of India, No. 2 Remko De Rije of the Netherlands, No. 3 Joel Kerley of Australia, No. 4 William Ward of New Zealand, No. 5 Coen Van Kuelen of the Netherlands and No. 6 Divij Sharan and No. 7 Tushar Liberhan of India.

Four other local wild cards—Michael Basco, Irwin de Guzman, Miguel Narvaez and Ralph Kevin Barte—failed to gain the second round of this event supported by Accel and Wilson balls.

Basco succumbed to Australian David Jeflea, 1-6, 1-6; De Guzman lost to Australian Steven Popovic, 3-6, 4-6; Narvaez fell to British qualifier Richard Wire, 5-7, 4-6, and Barte bowed to another British qualifier, Elliot Wronski, 4-6, 5-7.

In other matches, Hong Kong's Martin Sayer struggled past Taiwan's Chang Huai-en, 6-2, 7-6 (4); Australian Steven Goh outplayed Japanese Naoki Sato, 7-6 (3), 6-2; Romanian Victor Bogi Leonte rallied past Kevin Doh of New Zealand, 5-7, 6-2, 6-0; Indonesian qualifier Aryton-Wibowo survived Michael Leong of Solomon Island, 1-6, 6-2, 6-2, and Ireland's Tristan Mahon Farron defeated Indian qualifier Sanam Singh, 7-5, 6-1.

In the girls division, Filipino bets Alyssa Anne Labay, Melissa Orteza, Julie Em Botor and Catherine Flores also took an early exit.

Labay lost to Shona Lee of New Zealand, 0-6, 4-6; Orteza yielded to Korea's Lee Ye Ra, 0-6, 0-6; Botor fell to Indonesia's Sanaa Bhambri, 3-6, 3-6, and Flores bowed to Japan's Megumi Fukui, 0-6, 0-6.

Other results: Luka Ocvirk (SLO) d. James McGee (IRE), 6-1, 6-3; Philip Piyamongkol (GER) d. David Galic (AUS), 6-4, 6-0; Syrym Abdulkhalikov (KAZ) d. Keith Meisner (BRI), 6-1, 6-3.

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'No hope' Pinoy needs one big victory

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

YOU ask why Cebu's Yoyong Martirez feels every inch like an Olympic gold medal winner?

My dear friend is ecstatic and he wants to share his joy.

His son, Melville, has made it as a full-fledged physician, thanks to the PBA Players' Trust Fund that helped the young doc through college.

Yoyong, small, is perseverance personified.

We do remember him as a lean, wide-eyed, homeless aspirant who came to the Manila of his dreams armed only with a wornout bag, daring, quickness, and raw Bisaya basketball basics, before eventually making it to the RP Asian Youth team that won the title in Seoul in 1970.

He toiled long and hard. And, unlike many of today's overpaid, overprotective cage pros, Yoyong never hesitated to risk life and limb driving for a basket or darting for a blinding steal.

His breath-taking heroics that saw him steal twice and score twice at crunchtime in the 1971 Asian Basketball Conference (ABC) championship at Tokyo's Yoyogi Stadium, where the Philippines beat rival South Korea to earn a slot in the 1972 Munich Olympics, more than confirmed his status as a fiery, courageous internationalist.

***

Well, regarding that elusive Olympic gold, RP may again miss getting close to its dream medal in Athens.

But don't tell that to hordes upon hordes of Manny Pacquiao fans.

That Olympic dream, despite FPJ's earlier call to bag it, can wait.

What really matters to the Pinoy sports enthusiast is Pacquiao's next big Maytime fight in Las Vegas.

Latest reports say Pacquiao is literally scaling the heights, running up the stiff ranges where the famous HOLLYWOOD sign in dear old L.A. is mounted.

OK, he checked in a little late at Freddie Roach's Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood, where he's reportedly being stalled by fans, but Pacquiao is making sure he goes up against tough, hard-hitting Juan Manuel Marquez on a hefty full engine.

Everybody, except Pacquiao and his Filipino handlers, is convinced Marquez could spell trouble for the Filipino world boxing sensation.

We had viewed a replay of Marquez's TKO (on cuts) win over the aging Manuel Medina.

Marquez, you bet, could prove an easy target.

But this peppery Mexicano, who by now is totally aware of Pacquiao's suspect chin, could surely sock it hard to both body and head.

Marquez, called Dinamita, is also a sharp, explosive hitter.

***

Yes, nothing could be more exhilarating to the poor Pinoy than a Pacquiao win in May, hopefully coupled later in August with an RP Olympic gold medal in Athens.

That may be asking too much?

Maybe. But, although the peso continues to sink, prices of commodities continue to soar, the poor among us continue to multiply like summer flies day in day out, there's no stopping the Pinoy from dreaming.

And, more than the Olympic gold, our poor countrymen dream of salvation.

More than Pacquiao's victory in May, the poor, hungry Pinoy needs food on his table.

Will salvation come to the poor with the May presidential polls?

That's quite doubtful, no matter who ends up the big winner.

***

Would Pacquiao grabbing Marquez's twin title belts be followed by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's successful presidential defense?

Pacquiao, an avowed FPJ fan, has openly endorsed GMA.

In short, Pacquiao could be celebrating twin triumphs if he takes both of Marquez's IBF and WBA belts, then wakes up a couple of days later with the news of GMA's retention of her presidency.

But would the poor Pinoy be celebrating a double victory together with Pacquiao?

Quite doubtful. Why? Because you cannot expect the hungry *masa*, that continues to sink deeper in the mud and slur of poverty under the current administration, to unanimously count a Pacquiao win and a GMA triumph as a double victory.

All the poor Pinoy needs is one big win.

In fact, Yoyong Martirez couldn't have dared pursue his original dream had he ventured into our midst today.

The poor, small guy would have been discouraged by the nightmarish national mess, a crippling anomaly which a self-proclaimed people's hope effectively sustains.

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Coca-Cola	4	3
Talk 'N Text	4	3
Purefoods	3	4
Ginebra	3	5
Shell	3	5
FedEx	1	5
Sta. Lucia	1	6

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Four other local wild cards Michael Basco, Irwin de Guzman, Miguel Narvaez and Ralph Kevin Barte failed to gain the second round of this event supported by Accel and Wilson balls.

Basco succumbed to Australian David Jeflea, 1-6, 1-6; De Guzman lost to Australian Steven Popovic, 3-6, 4-6; Narvaez fell to British qualifier Richard Wire, [illegible], 4-6, and Barte bowed to another British qualifier, Elliot Wronski, 4-6, 5-7.

In other matches, Hong Kong's Martin Sayer struggled past Taiwan's Chang Huai-en, 6-2, 7-6 (4); Australian Steven Goh outplayed Japanese Naoki Sato, 7-6 (3), 6-2; Romanian Victor Bogi Leonte rallied past Kevin Doh of New Zealand, 5-7, 6-2, 6-0; Indonesian qualifier Aryton Wibowo survived Michael Leong of Solomon Island, 1-6, 6-2, 6-2, and Ireland's Tristan Mahon Farron defeated Indian qualifier Sanam Singh, 7-5, 6-1.

In the girls division, Filipino bets Alyssa Anne Labay, Melissa Orteza, Julie Em Botor and Catherine Flores also took an early exit.

Labay lost to Shona Lee of New Zealand, 0-6, 4-6. Orteza yielded to Korea's Lee Ye Ra, 0-6, 0-6; Botor fell to Indonesia's Sanaa Bhambri, 3-6, 3-6, and Flores bowed to Japan's Megumi Fukui, 0-6, 0-6.

Other results: Luka Ocvirk (SLO) d. James McGee (IRE) 6-4, 6-3; Pimp Piyamongkol (GER) d. David Galic (AUS), 6-4, 6-[illegible]; Syrym Abdulkhalikov (KAZ) d. Keith Meisner (BRI), 6-1, 6-3.

SPORTSWATCH

Araullo targets triathlon crown

NATIONAL champion Sandra Araullo, toughened by six weeks of rigorous training in New Zealand, targets the women's crown in the 2004 Speedo Asian Triathlon Championship set on Saturday and Sunday at the Subic Bay Freeport. The 22-year-old Araullo, who topped the 2003 National Triathlon Championships, is the Philippines' best hope in getting its first Asian triathlon crown. Her preparation included swimming in icy water and biking or running in chilly weather. "When I got back (from New Zealand), I saw the big improvement that I had. But there is a lot of work to be done for the Asian Triathlon," said Araullo, a BS Physics graduate from UP. In the national championship in Guimaras, Araullo clinched both the Elite Open and Under-23 titles. National athletes Lakambini Alto and Kaye Lopez are doubtful participants as they have been concentrating on training for the cycling team, while Popo Nagtalon has joined the duathlon team. The other contenders are Ani Karina de Leon, who has also been training in New Zealand, veteran Mylene Jarina, and dark horse Anna Balagosa, who are both from Cebu. Araullo started training for triathlon just to manage her chronic asthma attacks. Her successful performances as a junior player in the swim-bike-run event, however, convinced Araullo to give it a serious try. *Trina Ibarle*

Slasher Cup championship round

A BANNER crowd is expected to witness Roligon Mega Cockpit's "Slasher Cup ng Masa 6-Cock Derby" 110-fight championship round today. From a total 147 entries, only 11 remained unbeaten with three wins each. The pacesetters are Jake Macasaet (Alabastro), Joe Mojeno (TDR), Jun Carpina (Sto. Niño 588), Erwin Diamante and Rey Briones (RB 2 Diamante) Gerry Perez (Gerry Nigel), Edwin Recio and Alan Tan (4M Hatawan Sal Roligon June 28), engineer Samonte (Don Bosco), Erwin Diamante (Gerona Cockpit) and Dax Guanzon (Darling Dahan 2). A prize of P1.5 million, which is guaranteed by Roligon owner Rolly Ligon, awaits the winners. For inquiries, contact 833-2275, 833-1638, 852-9774 and 852-9812 (look for Aubrey, Shirley or Tiling).

Salpukan sa LPC debry tonight

LEADING cockers and breeders of Batangas, Parañaque and Las Piñas are gunning for the championship of the "Salpukan sa LPC 3-Cock Derby" tonight at the Las Piñas Coliseum. The 50-fight program will be sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Today's hosts are veteran cockers Jun Musico and Eddie Jog. At stake is a guaranteed prize of P200,000 with a P6,600 entry fee. Entries will be accepted from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. today. For inquiries, contact 873-1040 and 09205609404 (look for Gerry or Julius). Last Saturday, Laguna breeder Pol Estrellado topped the "BRBI 5-Cock Derby" after his entry posted 4.5 points

BURLINGTON SPONSORSHIP
Burlington socks GM Rudy Tan (2nd from left) and PBA Commissioner Noli Eala recently signed a memorandum of agreement making Burlington, the official socks of the PBA, as the sponsor of the first PBA junior basketball clinic and the PBA Junior Summer League, which opens on April 18. Witnesses are Rowena Tolentino (left) and Norman Black, longtime Burlington endorser.

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'No hope' Pinoy needs one big victory

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

YOU ask why Cebu's Yoyong Martirez feels every inch like an Olympic gold medal winner?

My dear friend is ecstatic and he wants to share his joy.

His son, Melville, has made it as a full-fledged physician, thanks to the PBA Players' Trust Fund that helped the young doc through college.

Yoyong, small, is perseverance personified.

We do remember him as a lean, wide-eyed, homeless aspirant who came to the Manila of his dreams armed only with a wornout bag, daring, quickness, and raw Bisaya basketball basics, before eventually making it to the RP Asian Youth team that won the title in Seoul in 1970.

He toiled long and hard. And, unlike many of today's overpaid, overprotective cage pros, Yoyong never hesitated to risk life and limb driving for a basket or darting for a blinding steal.

His breath-taking heroics that saw him steal twice and score twice at crunchtime in the 1971 Asian Basketball Conference (ABC) championship at Tokyo's Yoyogi Stadium, where the Philippines beat rival South Korea to earn a slot in the 1972 Munich Olympics, more than confirmed his status as a fiery, courageous internationalist.

* * *

Well, regarding that elusive Olympic gold, RP may again miss getting close to its dream medal in Athens.

But don't tell that to hordes upon hordes of Manny Pacquiao fans.

That Olympic dream, despite FPJ's earlier call to bag it, can wait.

What really matters to the Pinoy sports enthusiast is Pacquiao's next big Maytime fight in Las Vegas.

Latest reports say Pacquiao is literally scaling the heights, running up the stiff ranges where the famous HOLLYWOOD sign in dear old L.A. is mounted.

OK, he checked in a little late at Freddie Roach's Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood, where he's reportedly being stalled by fans, but Pacquiao is making sure he goes up against tough, hard-hitting Juan Manuel Marquez on a hefty full engine.

Everybody, except Pacquiao and his Filipino handlers, is convinced Marquez could spell trouble for the Filipino world boxing sensation.

We had viewed a replay of Marquez's TKO (on cuts) win over the aging Manuel Medina.

Marquez, you bet, could prove an easy target.

But this peppery Mexicano, who by now is totally aware of Pacquiao's suspect chin, could surely sock it hard to both body and head.

Marquez, called Dinamita, is also a sharp, explosive hitter.

* * *

Yes, nothing could be more exhilarating to the poor Pinoy than a Pacquiao win in May, hopefully coupled later in August with an RP Olympic gold medal in Athens.

That may be asking too much?

Maybe. But, although the peso continues to sink, prices of commodities continue to soar, the poor among us continue to multiply like summer flies day in day out, there's no stopping the Pinoy from dreaming.

And, more than the Olympic gold, our poor countrymen dream of salvation.

More than Pacquiao's victory in May, the poor, hungry Pinoy needs food on his table.

Will salvation come to the poor with the May presidential polls?

That's quite doubtful, no matter who ends up the big winner.

Would Pacquiao grabbing Marquez's twin title belts be followed by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's successful presidential defense?

Pacquiao, an avowed FPJ fan, has openly endorsed GMA.

In short, Pacquiao could be celebrating twin triumphs if he takes both of Marquez's IBF and WBA belts, then wakes up a couple of days later with the news of GMA's retention of her presidency.

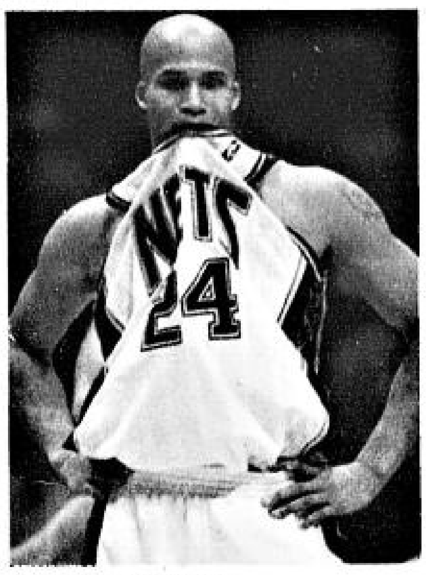
But would the poor Pinoy be celebrating a double victory together with Pacquiao?

Quite doubtful. Why? Because you cannot expect the hungry *masa*, that continues to sink deeper in the mud and slur of poverty under the current administration, to unanimously count a Pacquiao win and a GMA triumph as a double victory.

All the poor Pinoy needs is one big win.

In fact, Yoyong Martirez couldn't have dared pursue his original dream had he ventured into our midst today.

The poor, small guy would have been discouraged by the nightmarish national mess, a crippling anomaly which a self-proclaimed people's hope effectively sustains.



BITTEN, BEATEN
Nets' Richard Jefferson bites his jersey during New Jersey's 84-80 loss to the Boston Celtics. Complete results: Miami 105, Chicago 96; Memphis 136, Atlanta 133 (2ot); Boston 84, New Jersey 80; New York 92, Portland 91; Minnesota 94, Houston 88; San Antonio 101, Cleveland 93; Phoenix 101, Washington 95. AP

Agassi downs foe

MIAMI, Florida—Defending champion Andre Agassi wasted little time in dispatching Max Mirnyi of Belarus at the Nasdaq-100 Open on Monday, wrapping up a 6-2 6-2 third round victory in just 52 minutes.

The fourth-seeded American moves on to a showdown against Agustin Calleri for a place in the quarterfinals after the Argentine advanced with a 6-4 7-6 victory over Australian wildcard Todd Reid. *Reuters*

Can Frennie Reyes fit his father's shoes?

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

ONE big reason why many Filipinos are now playing billiards is because of the unparalleled success achieved by Efren "Bata" Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante in the international sporting scene.

But the question is: Who will take over when age and other human factors finally catch up with them? You see, Reyes will be 50 years old on Aug. 26 while Bustamante will be 41 on Dec. 29. Surely, they cannot be on top forever.

As Reyes himself said, "*Palaos na tayo ngayon* (I'm not getting any younger)." And even though he won two successive legs of this year's San Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour (in Singapore and Vietnam, respectively), Reyes still attributed this twin victories to pure luck, humbly admitting that he was no longer "The Magician" of old because he could no longer execute the shots he used to do 20 or even 10 years ago.

However, Reyes and Bustamante remain the country's best bets in major international tournaments such as this year's World Pool Championship in Cardiff in July where Reyes won in 1999 and Bustamante finished second in 2002. Still, if we do not want to relinquish our hard-earned place of honor in international pool, we should continue to work harder to discover and develop new talents who could take over when the time comes for them to finally sheath their cues.

"We must realize this and be prepared," said Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, president of Puyat Sports, the country's longtime billiards benefactor together with elder brother Jose "Popit" Puyat.

The Filipinos' unprecedented dominance of the pool tables is not a compelling reason for them to rest on their laurels. The quest for glory lives on. At the moment, the presence of several veteran internationalists and fresh faces in the local scene is a good sign that the Philippines is not lacking in talents. Among them are Warren Kiamco, Rodolfo Luat, Leonardo Andam, Lee Van Corteza, Venancio Tanio, Antonio Lining, Antonio Gabica, Ronnie Alcano, who is now campaigning in the US; Canada-based Alex Pagulayan and Frennie Reyes, 20-year-old son of Bata Reyes.

However, Reyes said he wouldn't want his son to pursue billiards as a lifetime career.

"It's just a sport for Frennie. We want him to finish college," said Efren, who quit school in favor of a career playing pool for money. Frennie is a second year college student, taking up computer science at the Holy Angel College in Angeles City.

Frennie saw action at the opening leg of the Asian Tour in Singapore last February but he did not make much impact because he's new in the game. He held his first cue only three years ago.

"My first love is basketball," he said in an interview in Singapore. "I play as a forward and as a guard, but my father wants me to play pool because he feels the risk of getting injured in basketball is very high."

Except for being told not to get nervous during a game, Frennie said he was not getting any tip from his father.

"Frennie should learn the sport on his own and develop his own style," said the elder Reyes. "That's how I learned my trade."

"It's OK," said Frennie. "I'm not famous yet. But given more time I can be as good, if not better, than my father."

ARROYO GUEST

Bacolod hosts Nat'l Palaro revival

By Trina Ibarle

NO LESS than President Macapagal-Arroyo will be the guest of honor when the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) revives the National Palaro from April 23 to 28 at the Panaad Sports Complex in Bacolod City.

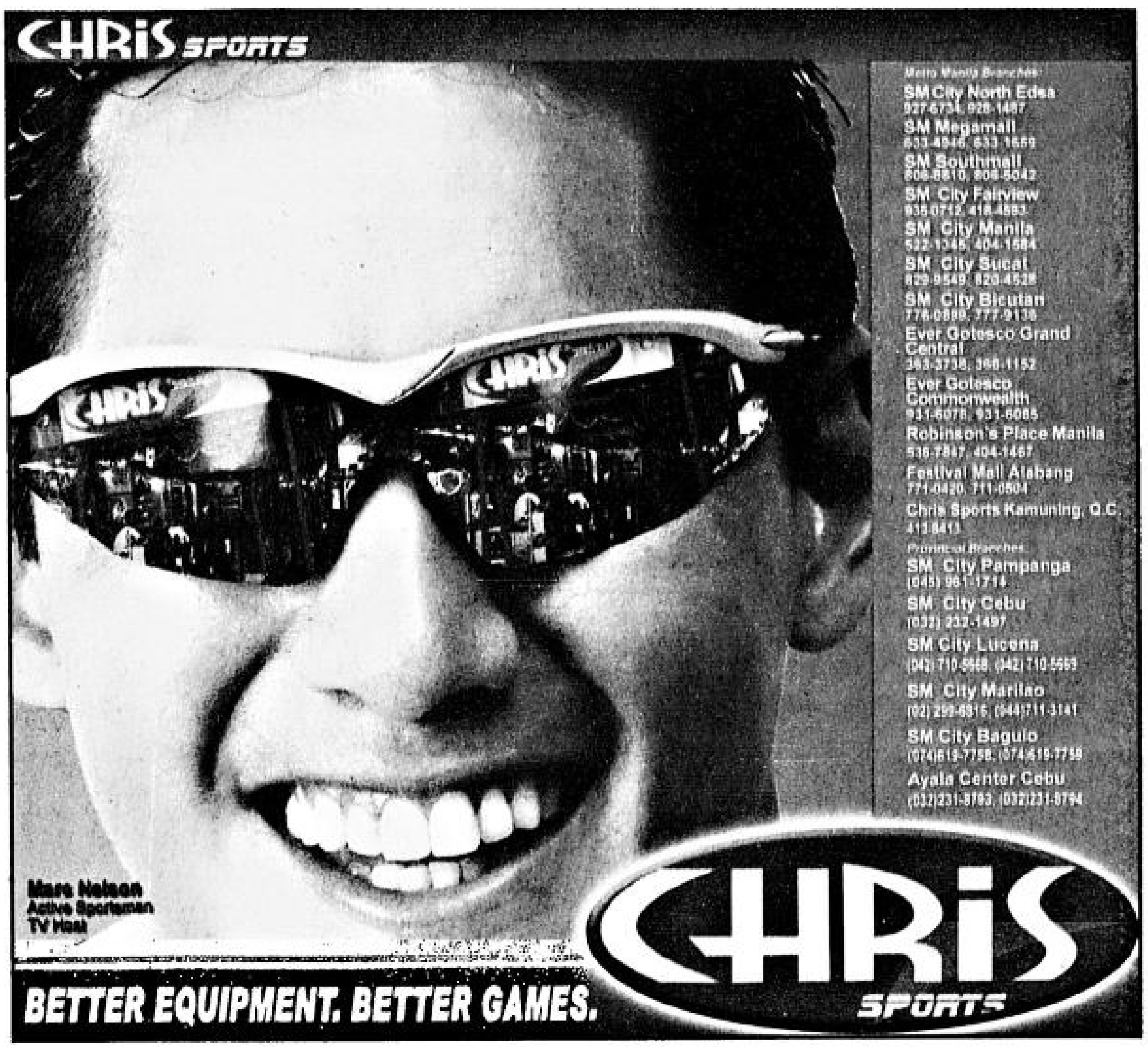
Mothballed the last three years due to funding constraints, the National Palaro returns to the local sporting scene through the initiative of CHED chair Bro. Rolando Dizon, FSC, former president of De La Salle University and an avid sports patron.

Close to 3,500 athletes from the country's 17 regions will compete in 10 sports—athletics, badminton, basketball, chess, dancesport, football, softball, swimming, taekwondo and volleyball. There will also be a vocal solo competition.

Spearheading the local preparations is the Negros Occidental Private Schools Sports, Cultural, and Educational Association (NOPSSCEA), in coordination with the CHED Regional Office in Western Visayas.

Following the theme "Unity Through Sports For a Strong Republic," the events will be played in different venues either at the Panaad Sports Complex or in surrounding facilities in Bacolod City.

Football will be played at the Panaad, Bago/Silay City and at the University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos, while basketball will be held at the University of St. La Salle and at the Silay City Gym.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Hard Rock celebrates the classics

HARD Rock Cafe ends the month of March with a musical event tonight.

Dubbed as Sing the Classics at Hard Rock Cafe, the concert features world-class performers Eddie Mercado, Ayen Munji-Laurel and Jose Mari Chan.

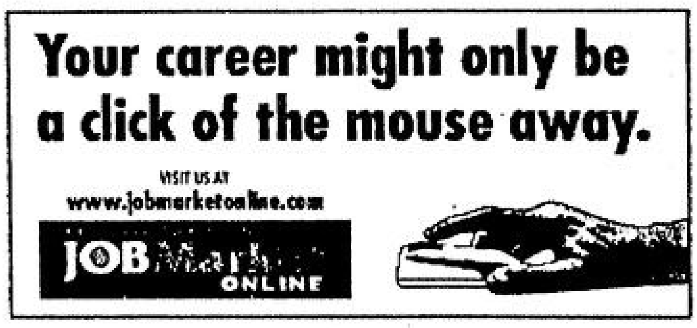
Sing the Classics at Hard Rock Cafe is in line with HRC's music for life advocacy campaign.

For the past eight years, HRC has been living up to its image of quality entertainment—from good food to excellent service to premium entertainment, which it brings closer to the local market.

Over the years, HRC has presented an eclectic number of concerts that showcase the different genres of music from pop to rock to heavy metal, and now the classics.

Classic music buffs are in for a wonderful treat because Sing the Classics at Hard Rock Cafe features a repertoire that highlights well-loved classics including "Look for Your Heart," "I Love My Wife," and "Change Partners."

Sing the Classics at Hard Rock Cage is supported by Lipton Ice Tea, Colt Ice and Sharp. For inquiries, call 893-4661 to 64.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Paris court allows 'Passion' showing

PARIS—A demand that Mel Gibson's popular film, "The Passion of the Christ," be banned in France because of a perceived anti-Semitic theme was thrown out by a Paris court Monday.

"The film in question... cannot be considered an incitation to hate and violence against people of the Jewish confession or attacking their dignity or safety," the judge hearing the matter, Florence Lagemi, said.

Ban rejected

She rejected the request for a ban lodged by three French Jewish brothers, Patrick, Jean-Marc and Gerard Benlolo, clearing the way for the movie to open nationally on Wednesday.

The judge said the film did not threaten the safety of Jews "seeing as it did not appear that there had been major manipulation of the Biblical texts, nor that the film was made with an obvious aim to attack that community."

Anti-Jewish

The Benlolos had claimed that the film, which depicts the final hours of Jesus Christ's life before crucifixion, incited anti-Jewish hatred "because it resulted in an erroneous presentation of the Bible by showing the Jews to be deicides (god killers), which is the cause of persecution against Jews."

That contention also surfaced in the lead-up to the film's screenings in the United States, creating media interest that contributed to its major commercial success there.

Top US grosser

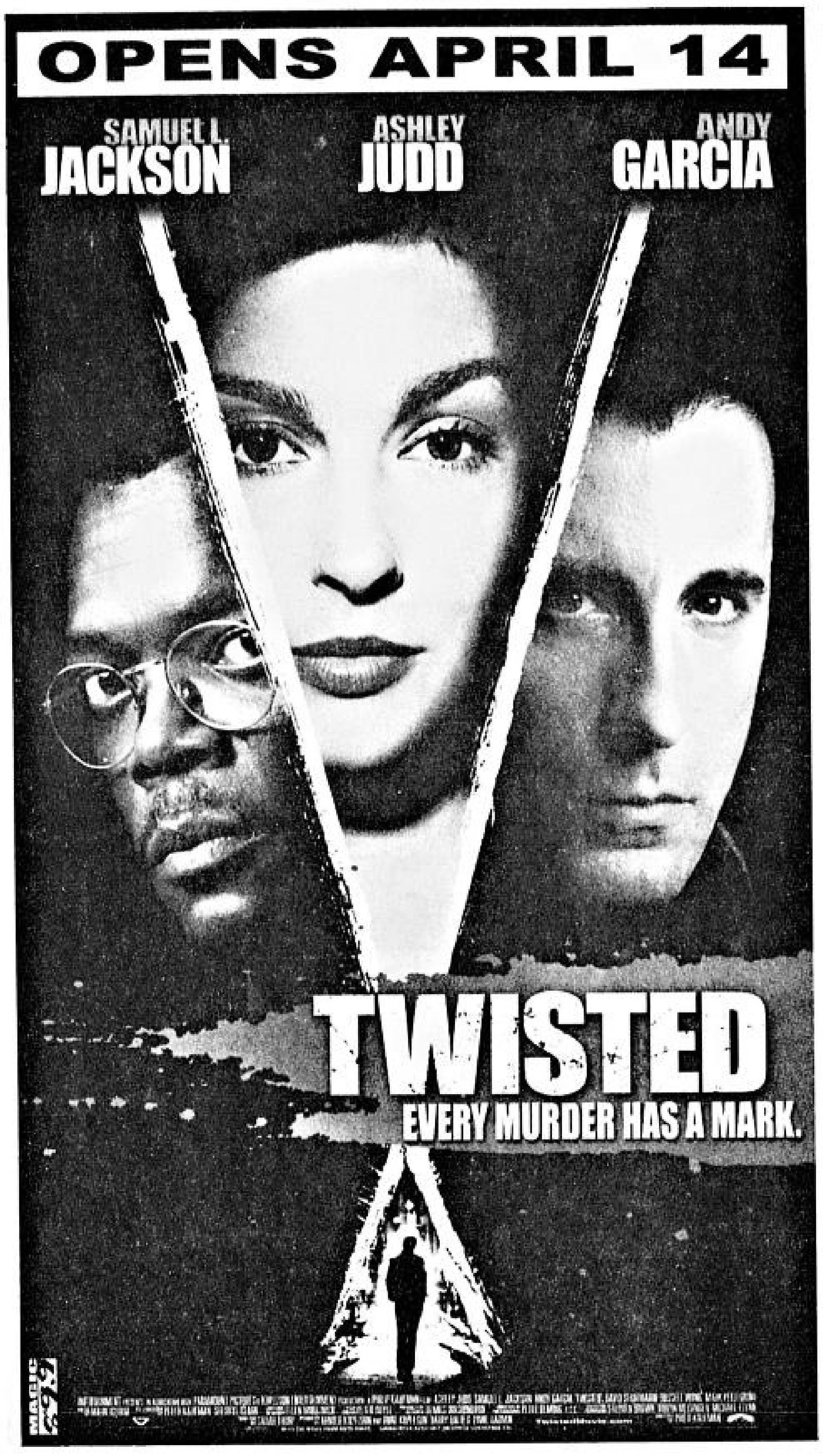
It has become the biggest-grossing US movie so far this year, raking in more than 300 million dollars (250 million euros).

Although the movie has been held to be faithful to the New Testament Gospels, some Jews have criticised it for repeating scenes from those texts depicting Jews as responsible for Jesus Christ's death.

Appeal planned

Gibson, an Australian actor and director, adheres to a fringe Catholic faith that rejects a series of Vatican decrees issued between 1962 and 1965 exculpating Jews.

The Benlolo brothers said they intended to appeal the judge's decision.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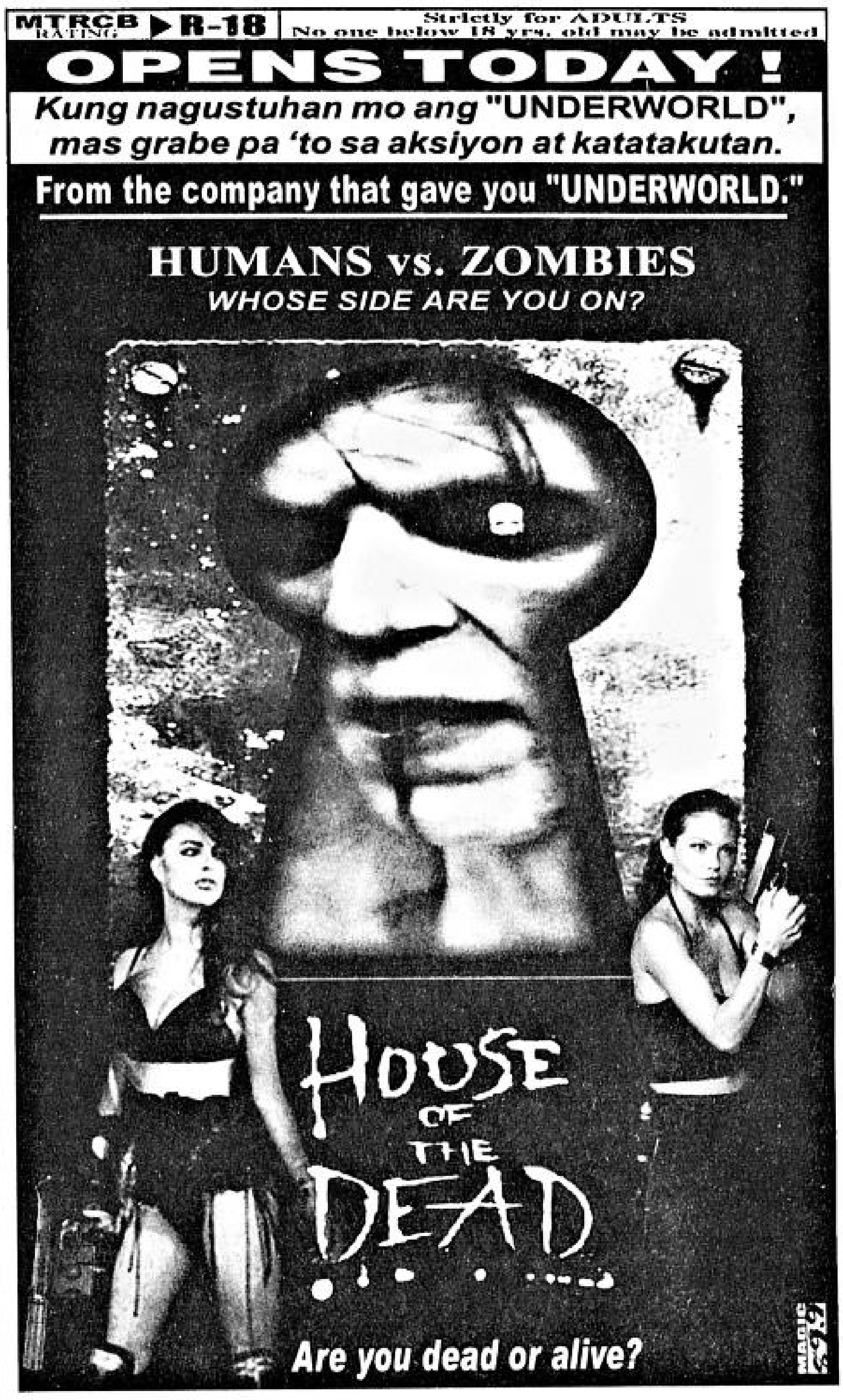
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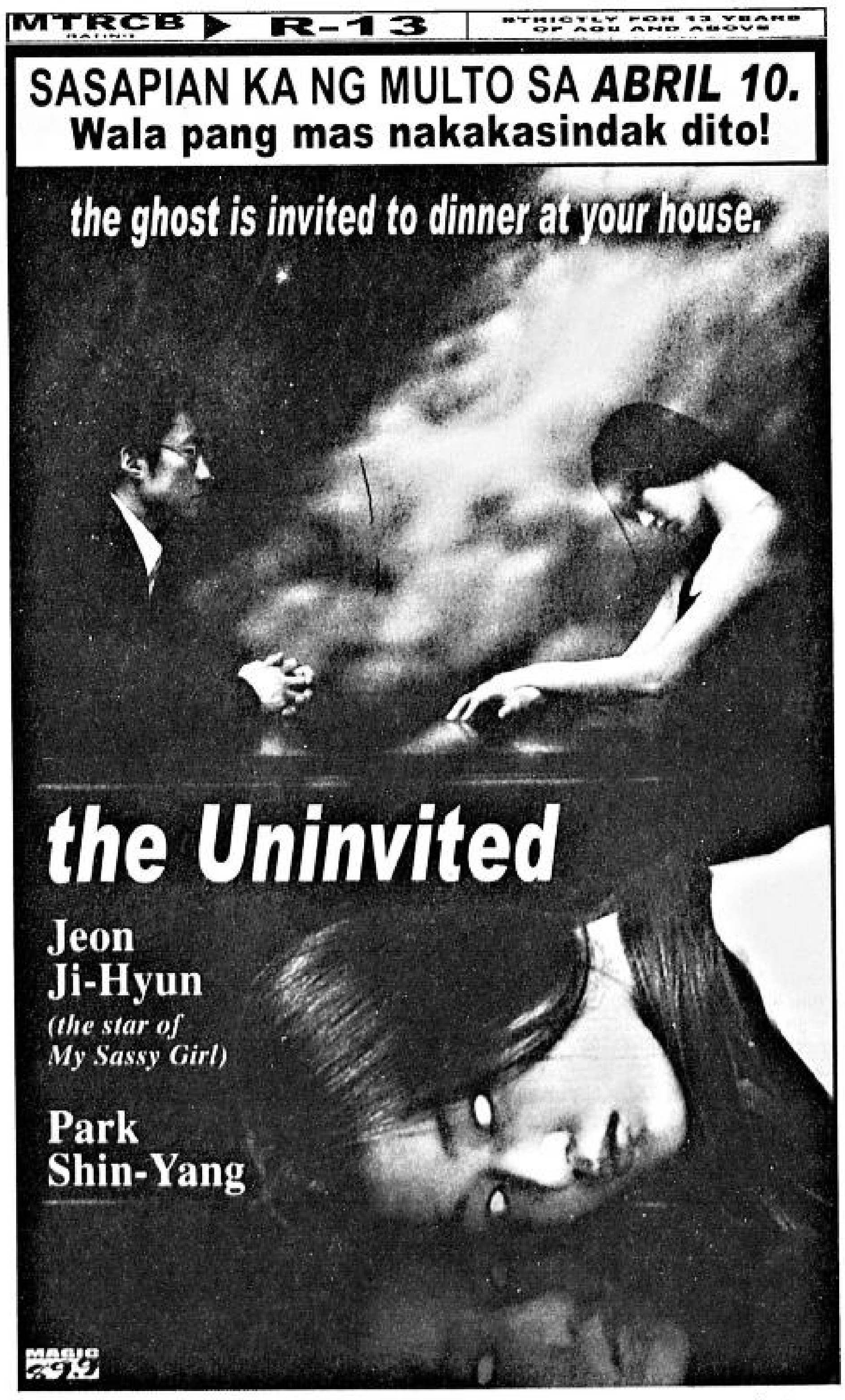
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(the star of My Sassy Girl)
Park Shin-Yang

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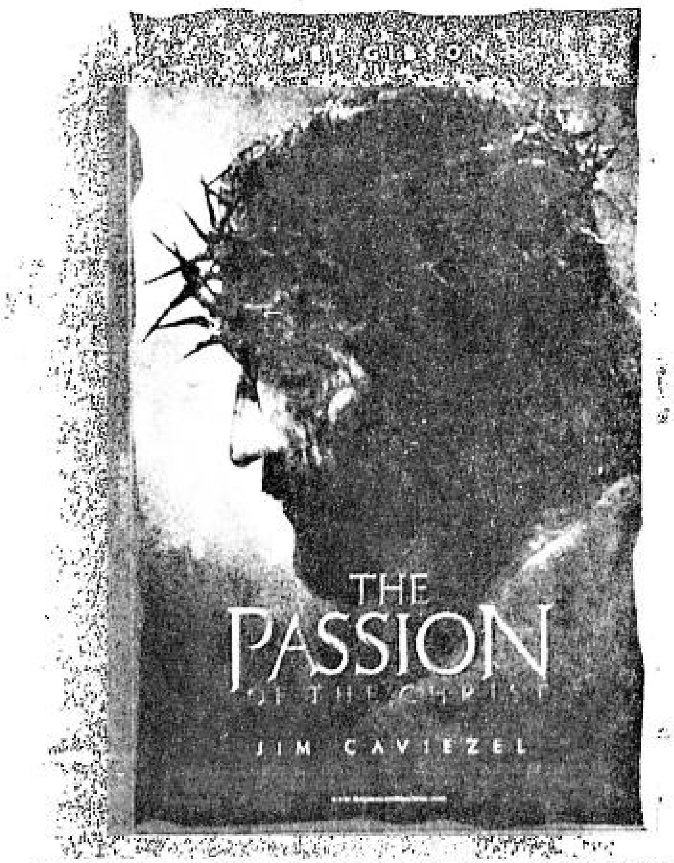
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Cinema 2 - 11:50 AM, 2:30 PM, 5:10
Cinema 3 – 12:20 PM, 3:00, 5:40, 8:20, 11:00

GLORIETTA 4
Cinema 1 - 11:45 AM, 2:40 PM, 5:35, 8:30, 11:25
Cinema 2 - 12:55 PM, 3:50, 6:45, 9:40
Cinema 3 (THX) - 1:25 PM
Cinema 6 – 11:10 AM, 2:05 PM, 5:00, 7:55, 10:50

AYALA CENTER CEBU
Cinema 2 – 11:25 AM, 1:35 PM, 4:25
Cinema 3 – 1:00 PM, 3:30, 6:00, 8:50
Cinema 4 - 11:40 AM, 2:10 PM, 4:40, 10:00

GLORIETTA 1
Cinema 1 - 12:45 PM, 3:30, 6:15, 9:00
Cinema 2 – 10:30 AM, 1:15 pm, 4:00, 6:45, 9:30

GREENBELT 1
Cinema 1 - 11:50 AM, 2:35 PM, 5:20, 8:05
Cinema 2 – 11:20 AM, 2:05 PM, 4:50, 7:35, 10:20

GREENBELT 3
Cinema 1 (THX) – 2:05 PM, 4:50, 7:35, 10:20
Cinema 2 (THX) – 2:35 PM, 5:20, 10:50
Cinema 3 - 12:20 PM, 3:05, 5:50, 11:20
Cinema 4 – 9:05 PM, 11:50
Cinema 5 – 9:40 PM

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'New blood' in bodabil

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

HERE's a skit, delivered with all aplomb, on a famous woman personality now seeking re-election to the Senate: It's sung to the tune of "Jingle Bells:"

"Iboto, iboto si M...S...Tililing, tililing, tililing? Siya ay magaling..."

The performers are the members of Bagong Dugo, a group led by Joel Saracho, journalist-performance artist, and graduate of the 1980s Parliament of the Streets. Their stage show is a melange of bodabil acts, song-and-dance routines, stand-up comedy, cause-oriented advocacy, and wicked political satire.

Varied backgrounds

The other members are Rey Abella, Ferdie Aboga, Alexx (sic) Agcoaili, and Jojit Lorenzo. One colleague, Noel Carpio, passed away in March of last year while another, guitarist Louie Queaño, is now in Canada.

Their backgrounds are varied, including theater arts, voicing, soap operas, computer science, and mass communication. It all started in 1990 when Saracho, perhaps tired of clenching his fist in every possible way, sought new forms of theater and then formed the group.

Tribute to OFWs

Except for Saracho, all were students then. Their themes included human rights and the scourge of the US bases. They also paid tribute to the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs); and one of their songs, "Babalik Ka Rin" was dedicated to Flor Contemplacion.

Soon Bagong Dugo became a favorite of human rights groups, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), politicized showmen like Willie Nepomuceno, and open-minded corporations like the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

Sometimes they would guest on TV, and appear in concert tours and fiestas. Once, in Antique, they were fetched in an ambulance, and the irony or morbid humor of the situation—for a group called "new blood"—did not escape them.

Performances were off and on through the years. But now, with the campaign season in full swing, the group is in demand again. They're again adapting standard as well as hit songs, and giving the lyrics a new twist. And they're in their element thumbing their noses at the presidential candidates.

For FPJ

For FPJ, to the tune of the new "Bulaklak" as popularized by the Viva Hot Babes: "Sasaya ang bayan meron halalan/Ating iboto si Fernando Poe/Bubuka ang lupa, lalamunin tayo..."

For Ping

For Panfilo Lacson, to the tune of "Sing/Sing a Song...": "Ping, Ping Lacson, Na-involve Sa Kuratong/Ang pangarap niya maging Pangulo/Pero ayaw ng partido, kay Ping/Ping Lacson!"

For Roco

For Raul Roco, to the tune of "Filemon si Filemon:" "Raul Roco 2x, siya na raw ang Pangulo/Magsu-survey at su-survey palagi raw llamado/Hindi raw niya matatanggap na siya ay matalo/Masisira ulo ko 2x dito kay Raul Roco."

For GMA

And for President Arroyo, to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" a.k.a. "Gloria Labandera": "Gloria Gloria Mac-Arroyo/Sinipa niya si Erap siya ngayon ang Pangulo/Nag-promise siya noon di na raw siya tatakbo/Pero nang si Jose Pidal ay may iskandalo, ang tanong ngayon/Alam ba Toh ng misis mo?"

Starry show at Ultra

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Starry, Starry Night Live at Ultra features rock artist Bayang Barrios, Joey Ayala (The Conspiracy Group), diva Janine Desiderio and The Company.

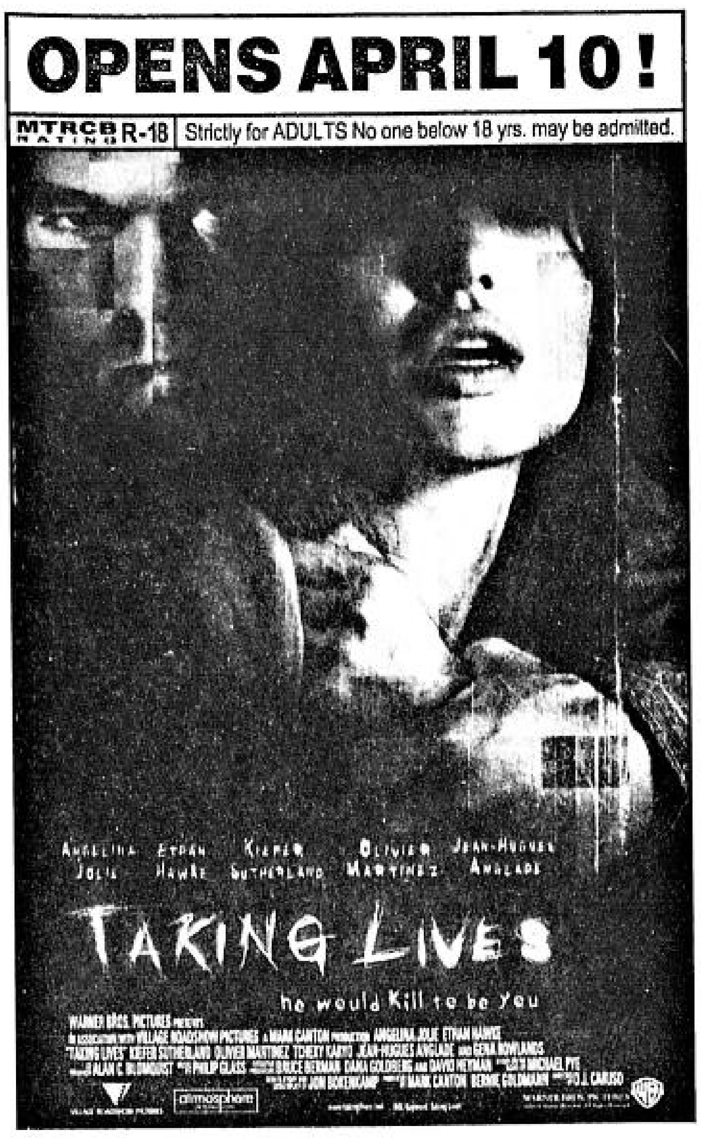
Gary Granada, Asin, rockers Alamid and the boys of the '70s—Boyfriends, who surged into the retro scene—are also performing.

Eugene Villaluz will dish out his patented sound and some new songs.

Gen X stars in the making Sheryn Regis and Johann Escanan as well as Rochelle De Vega, will show off their vocal prowess and star power.

Jay Sonza, a concert aficionado, will also perform.

The concert happens on April 16, 2003 for the benefit of Santuario de San Vicente de Paul's alumni group, which is set to build a church in Tandang Sora Avenue, Quezon City.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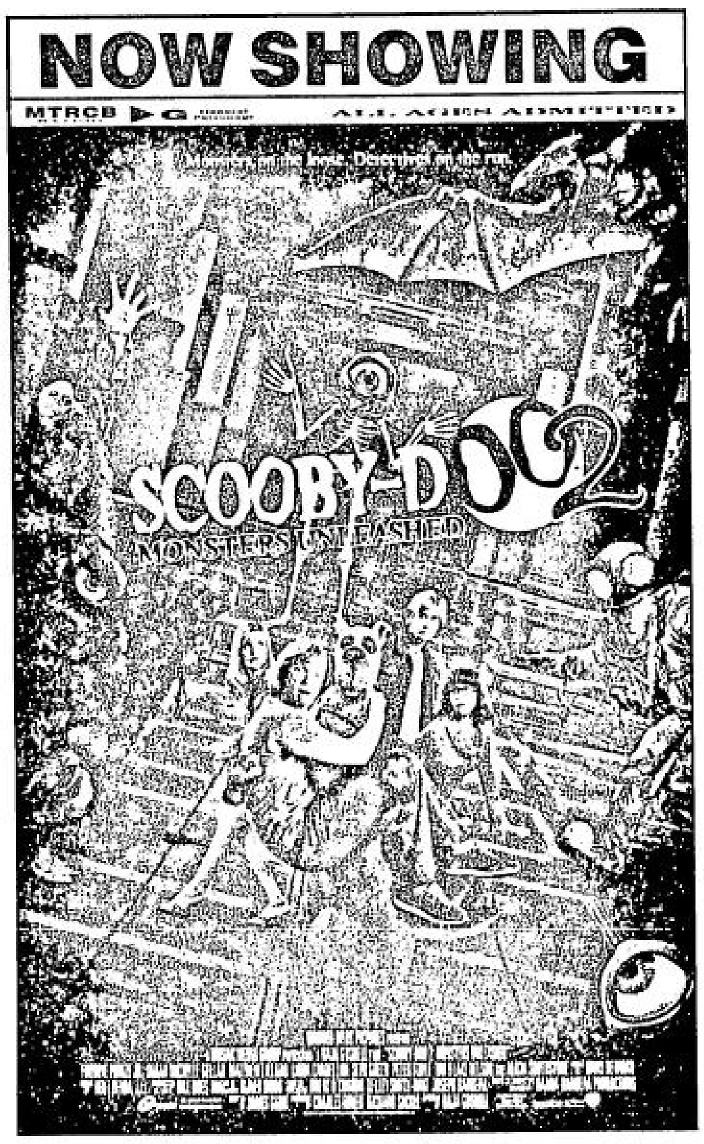
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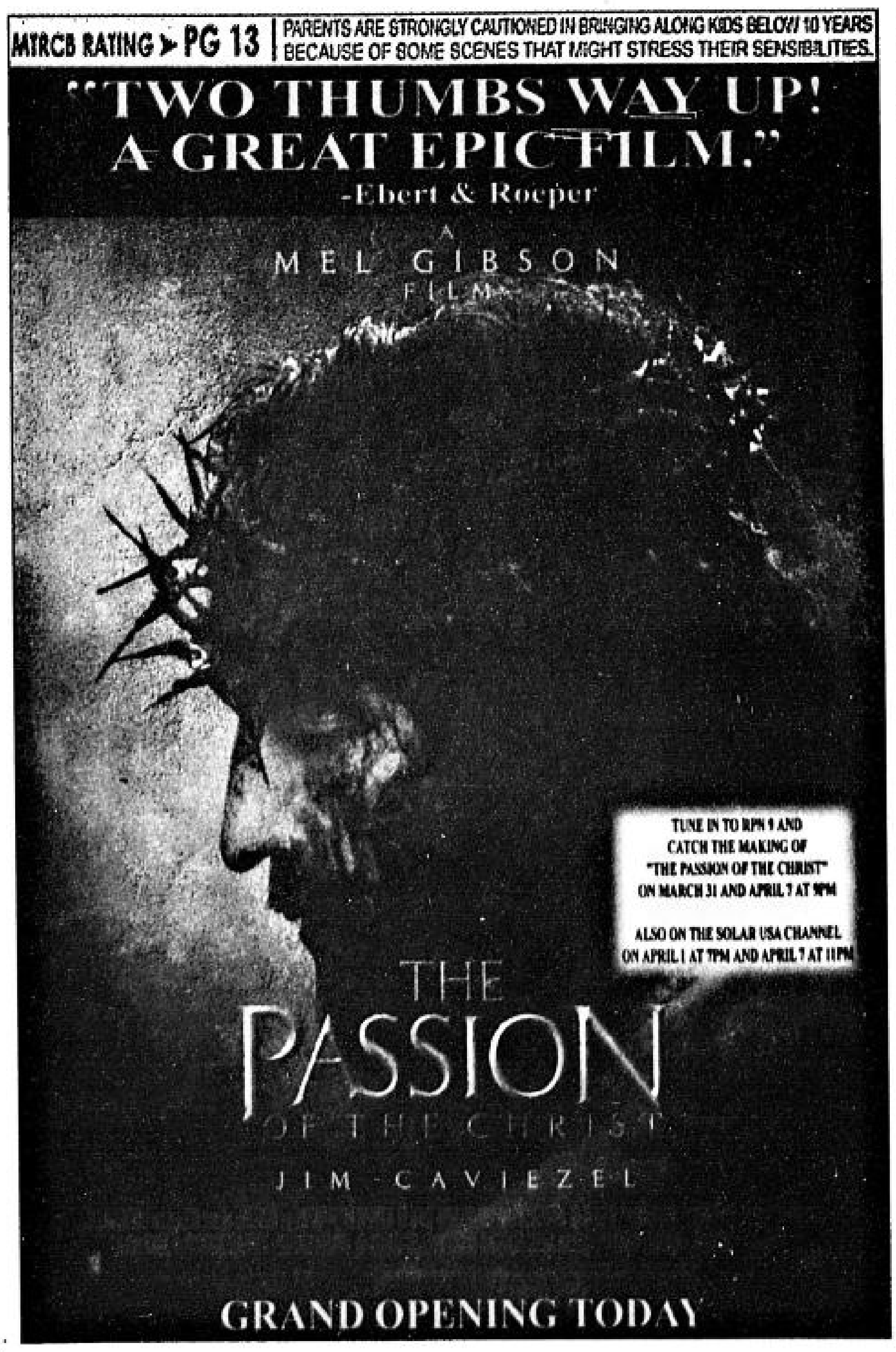
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SCOOBY DOO 2 GP 11:40, 1:40, 3:40, 5:40, 7:40, 9:40	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 12:30, 3:10, 5:50	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 1:10, 3:50, 6:30, 9:10
THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 9:50	50 FIRST DATES PG13 12:05, 2:00, 3:55, 5:50, 7:55, 10:00	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST PG13 11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 10:30

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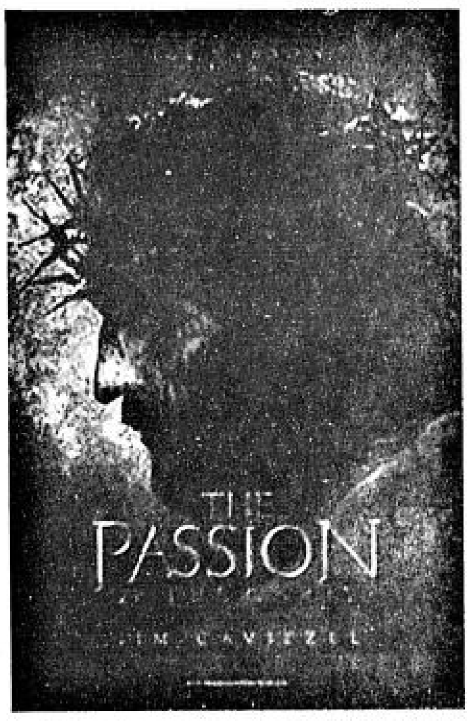
THE PASSION
JIM CAVIEZEL

THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
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MARCH 31

MTRCB Rating: PG-13
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- Paul Clinton, CNN

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MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13 (R-13)

New band shines

WHEN you're a new band with a No. 1 hit single, an MTV platform and a "Bands to Watch" citation from major music publications, it means that you have the permission to shine.

Such is the case of 6Cyclemind, a relatively new band which, with the exception of veteran guitarist/producer Chuck Isidro formerly of After Image, has already gotten everyone singing along with their debut hit single "Biglaan."

The song has spent more than 8 weeks at the top spot of NU 107's Midnight Countdown and more than 4 weeks at No. 1 on Monster Radio RX 93.1's Weekly Countdown Top 7.

The music video for the song also peaked on MYX's OPM charts. The release of the band's new single "Paba" has incidentally propelled them to take on MTV Philippines' platform as Rising Star Artist for March.

Composed of members Ney (vocals), Rye (guitars), Bobby (bass), Gilbert (drums). Chuck (guitars) and Darwin (songwriter/manager), 6Cyclemind has already created a buzz by enthralling music lovers not only with their impeccable covers of modern rock anthems but also with their original music categorized under the alternative/pop crossover sound.

"Biglaan" and "Paba" are from their recently released debut album "Permission to Shine," which is now available in CD's and cassettes under BMG Records (Pilipinas) Inc., presented in cooperation with Audiophile Components and Mossimo.

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX

Ali 3	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
Ali 4	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
Ali 5	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
Ali 6	HIGHWAYMEN
Ali 7	OTSO OTSO

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ARANETA COLISEUM

MAR 31	PBA. SAN MIGUEL VS. ALASKA
APR 1	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
APR 4	PBA: GINEBRA VS. TALK 'N' TEXT
APR 8	OLPH RETREAT (7AM)/ SHALOM (1PM)
APR 9	OLPH RETREAT (7AM)/ SHALOM (1PM)
APR 10	OLPH RETREAT (7AM)/ SHALOM (2PM)
APR 11	PBA: FED EX VS. RED BULL
APR 13	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
APR 14	PBA PUREFOODS VS RED BULL

For tickets, call TicketNet at 911-5555

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	KASIPING
B	CLOSED
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	OTSO OTSO
CINEMA-2	KARIBAL
CINEMA-3	MAGNIFICO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	HAUNTED OFFICE
CINEMA-6	GRUDGE 2
CINEMA-7	TORQUE
CINEMA-8	HIGHWAYMEN
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PASSION OR THE CHRIST
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-12	SCOOBY DOO 2
CINEMA-14	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
CINEMA-15	50 FIRST DATES
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	THE CURSE
CINEMA-1	OTSO OTSO
CINEMA-2	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
CINEMA-4	[illegible]
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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RESERVED SEATING

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

1	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30 PG-13
2	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00 PG-13
3	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	10:30, 1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30 PG-13
4	SCOOBY-DOO 2	11:50, 1:55, 4:00 6:05, 8:10, 10:15 GP

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NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1	PASSION OF THE CHRIST	10:50, 1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 9:50 P13
CINEMA 2	PASSION OF THE CHRIST	11:20, 2:05, 4:50, 7:35, 10:30 P13

Special screening of
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EVIL HITS THE ROAD

JIM CAVIEZEL RHONA MITRA

HIGHWAYMEN

3RD WEEK

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Hindi ka na magigising sa bangungot na 'to!

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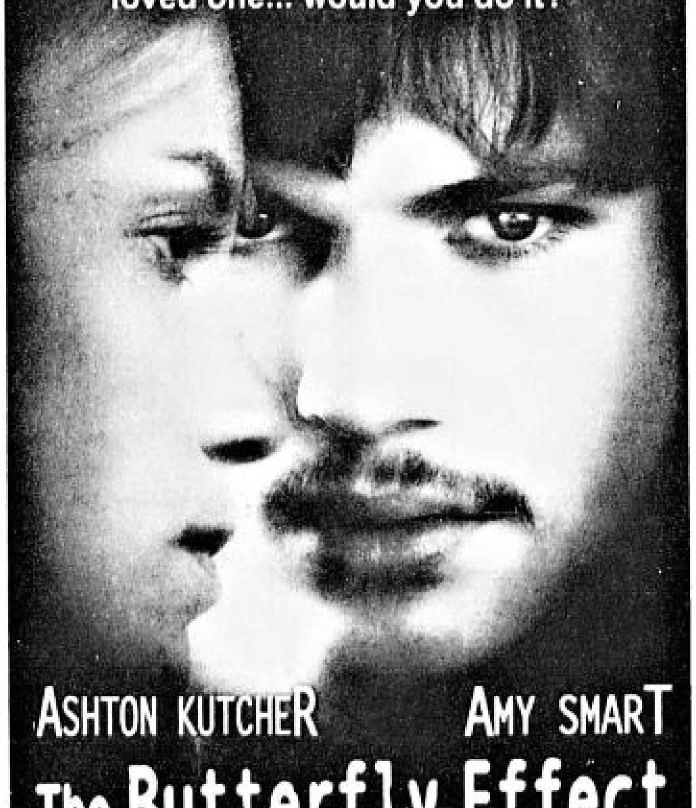

ASHTON KUTCHER AMY SMART

The Butterfly Effect

A TERRIFYING JOURNEY INTO THE UNKNOWN.

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF FINAL DESTINATION 2

More movies on page B13.

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CINEMA 1 THX	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4	SCOOBY DOO 2
5	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
7	DON'T TEMPT ME
8	50 FIRST DATES
9	LOVE ACTUALLY
10	THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P100 THX cinema / P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P130 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA 526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12

1	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2	SCOOBY DOO 2
3	DON'T TEMPT ME
4	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
5	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6	50 FIRST DATES
7	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Big R Supercenter **METRO EAST** 682-8193/99 / 682-8280

1	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
2	50 FIRST DATES
3	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
7	SCOOBY DOO 2
8	OTSO-OTSO

Big R Supercenter **NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW** 935-3229 / 31

1	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
4	THE GRUDGE 2
5	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6	SCOOBY DOO 2
7	50 FIRST DATES
8	OTSO-OTSO

Citisquare MALABON 288-0985/2575	big Supercenter CAINTA 240-4661	Big R Supercenter STA. ROSA Laguna (049)837-0907
1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	2 SCOOBY DOO 2	2 HIDALGO
3 SCOOBY DOO 2	3 OTSO-OTSO	3 THE GRUDGE 2
4 OTSO-OTSO	4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	4 THE CURSE
		5 SCOOBY DOO 2

Big R Supercenter LIPA 757-3664 / 312-5870	Big R Supercenter DASMARIÑAS 852-2125	Big R Supercenter STARMILLS San Fernando Pampanga 875-1927 / 961-5270
1 50 FIRST DATES	1 SCOOBY DOO 2	1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 OTSO-OTSO	2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 KARIBAL	3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	3 50 FIRST DATES
4 THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT	4 50 FIRST DATES	4 SCOOBY DOO 2
5 SCOOBY DOO 2	5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	5 THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT
		6 THE NIGHTMARE

IMUS 471-8188 / 875-5858	BACOLOD 441-0458/59	ILOILO 336-8070/78
1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	1 TORQUE	1 TORQUE
2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	2 HIDALGO	2 GOTHIKA
3 SCOOBY DOO 2	3 LOVE ACTUALLY	3 LOVE ACTUALLY
4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD	4 GOTHIKA	4 THE NIGHTMARE
5 OTSO-OTSO	5 SCOOBY DOO 2	5 BONE SNATCHER
6 HIGHWAYMEN	6 OTSO-OTSO	6 SCOOBY DOO 2

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House of the Dead

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Robinsons Movieworld
Angeles, Pampanga

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Diether, Kristine Hermosa disliked each other on sight

By Jocelyn Valle
Contributor

THE NEWEST television coupling of Diether Ocampo and Kristine Hermosa started as intense dislike for each other.

This is what the couple admitted to Inquirer Entertainment during a press visit on the set of their new soap series.

"When you don't really know her, you'll have a bad impression of her," said Diether.

"*Siya rin, feeling n'ya ang gwapo-gwapo n'ya* (Same with him; he acts as if he's very handsome)," was Kristine's quick retort. "But all of that changed when we started working closely together."

Even if the two are not involved with anybody at present, both do not see a future where they would fall in love with each beyond "Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas" in Macabebe, Pampanga.

Sparks

"For me, there should be sparks between me and the guy that I like. There are still no sparks between me and Diether," Kristine confessed.

She confided that she only felt sparks with Jericho. Among the men she has been linked to, it was only Jericho who became her boyfriend, says Kristine.

But she's not lacking in suitors. There's a guy from Cebu who has been ardently pursuing Kristine for four years now. But the actress claimed that she's not inclined to plunge into a relationship yet.

"Right now, I'm single and happy. I'm more careful now in getting into a relationship. I got so hurt from the last one with Echo (Jericho's pet name). It's so hard for me now to trust again. I don't want to cry again," says Kristine.

Kristine's and Jericho's love team was launched in 2001 in the soap "Pangako sa 'Yo." In their second movie together, "Ngayong Nandito Ka," Fil-Austrian model-turned-actress and host Cindy Kurleto played the other woman in the couple's love story. Cindy was also said to have been the reason for the couple's breakup.

Although Jericho and his reported current ladylove, Cindy Kurleto, have not publicly admitted their romance, Kristine believes the two are an item.

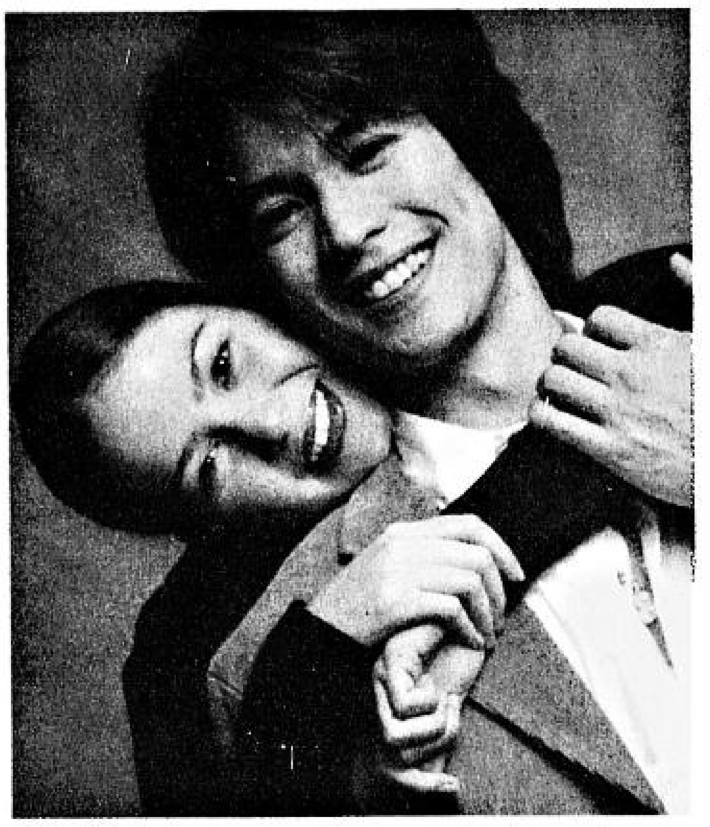
Motivation

"That's why there's no reconciliation between us," she said. "And there's peace in my life now."

The heartbreak has served as Kristine's motivation in her acting. She's not affected by the entry of Angelika in "Sana'y Wala nang Wakas," who was also Jericho's girlfriend before she entered the picture.

"We're not close because we haven't done a scene together. I really hope that it will happen soon," she said.

Kristine is also doing a movie opposite Aga Muhlach, where she plays a "runaway bride" who finds solace while on a cruise.



DIET and Tin: Things changed when they started working closely.

This is a big opportunity for Kristine to prove that she's ready for solo stardom. Apart from swapping dramatic lines with Aga, she also has several kissing scenes with him.

"I don't know how many. We've only done one," she says. "I always feel uncomfortable in kissing scenes. I would shake because of nervousness."

Eye-opener

Like Kristine, co-star Diether is hesitant to get involved. In fact, he saw himself in the character Jack Nicholson played in the romantic comedy "Something's Gotta Give." He admitted that he can even relate to Nicholson's line to a heartbroken Diane Keaton: "I don't know how to be a boyfriend."

Diether called the statement an "eye-opener."

He explained: "I acted as if I was committed in a relationship but I was not really."

Diether was obviously referring to a past dalliance that turned into a non-romance.

He admitted that he was also affected by the scene where Nicholson's lothario character, Harry Sanborn, is slapped whenever he meets his many ex-girlfriends, except for Marin (Amanda Peet), who plays Keaton's daughter in the film.

Coy

"I got scared when I watched the movie because I felt that I would end up like him, who was already old when he finally fell in love," Diether told Inquirer Entertainment.

He turned coy when asked his age and refuses to divulge how old he is. But in the Talent Center's page in the ABS-CBN web site, Diether's birthday is listed as July 19, 1976, making him 27 years old.

This makes the actor, band member and businessman four decades younger than Nicholson's Harry, who is 63 in the movie, and 67 in real life.

Diether also declined to talk about his past relationships. But he said he's unattached at the moment. His eyes disappear into slits as his dimples show in full splendor when he is asked about his rumored girlfriend, Andrea Bautista, a chinky-eyed beauty with deep dimples on her cheeks.

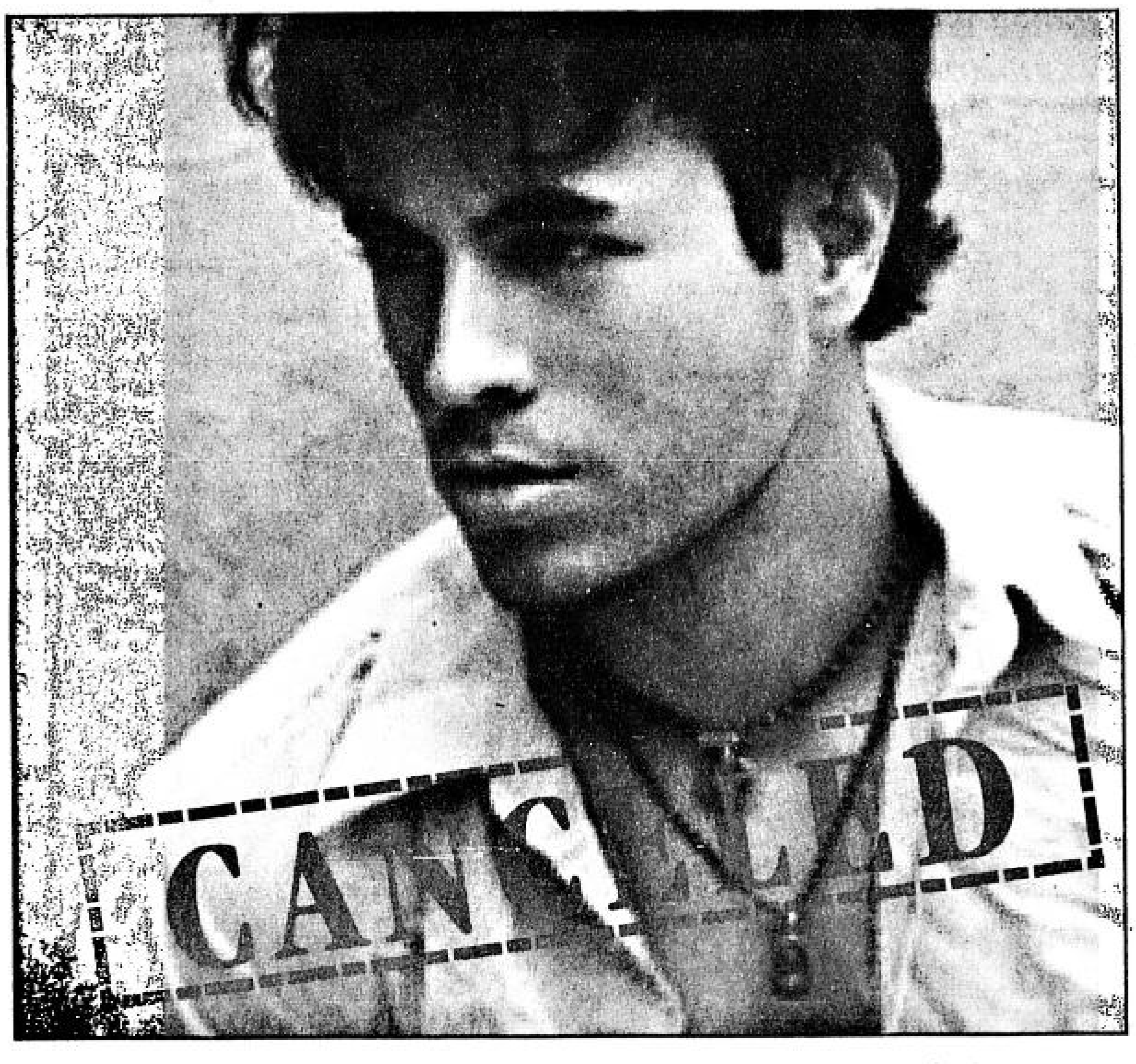
He claimed that he and Sen. Ramon Revilla's daughter have been friends long before he entered show business. He added says he doesn't have a problem with Andrea's family, contrary to what has been reported before. In fact, he has campaigned for her actor-brother and senatorial candidate, Bong Revilla Jr., in Cavite, where Diether also hails from.

Reluctant soap star

"Only time can tell on what's going to happen between me and her," he said, stressing that it's very important for him to have an inspiration. He said he's determined more than ever to excel in his profession. He might be involved in several enterprises like a water-refilling station, a publishing company and a fitness center, but show business is still his top priority, says Diether.

Diether admitted he was initially reluctant to act in a soap opera again. A few years ago, he starred in the afternoon soap, "Recuerdo de Amor." But the chance to work anew with the director and the production team of his past show made him accept the offer.

"Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas" was supposed to be a vehicle for the successful Kristine Hermosa-Jericho Rosales tandem. But the storyline took some serious twists and turns, and now Jericho (as Christian) is paired with Angelika de la Cruz (Mary Ann), while Kristine (Ara) cozies up with Diether (Leo).



Enrique Iglesias has Visa problems

By Marinel R. Cruz

SPANISH pop singer Enrique Iglesias has said adios to his concerts in Hong Kong, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Manila because of problems with his work permit in Malaysia

. Iglesias, 28, the son of balladeer Julio Iglesias, was supposed to have a seven-city Asian tour, which began in Indonesia last March 28.

But the younger Iglesias had to cancel several shows because Malaysian concert organizer, LCM Group-Live Concerts (M) Sdn Bhd, was "so slow to issue required work permits," USA Today quoted Nigel Peters of Hong Kong Midas Productions as saying.

Iglesia's Kuala Lumpur gig was initially set last March 30.

"The intention to postpone the concert (from March 30 to April 2), was due to purported visa problems encountered by the Spanish singing star," Malaysia's The Star reported.

Iglesias was supposed to perform here in a one-night concert on April 2 at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City.

There were no reports on whether Iglesias' shows in Bangkok in Thailand, Mumbai and Bangalore in India on April 8, 11 and 13, respectively, would also be canceled.

25 tons of equipment

According to Peters, the delays made it impossible to ship everything needed for the shows in all the cities where the shows had been scheduled.

"When you're moving 25 tons of equipment and nearly 55 people, you can't just keep changing the schedule," Peters had said. "It reached a position where it just wasn't cost-effective for the artist. If it's just a small group and a couple of crates of equipment, it's no problem."

Peters said Malaysia eventually approved the paperwork, but it was too late to push through with Iglesia's Hong Kong concert. He added that he lost money promoting the Hong Kong show, but he wouldn't provide figures.

Brisk ticket sales

"Tickets to Enrique Iglesias' show here were selling briskly," said Luke Pasiliao of Araneta Center Inc.

"It was too bad that his American promoters encountered trouble in Malaysia," Pasiliao added.

The local promoter of Iglesias' "7 World Tour" said people who had bought tickets to the concert can get refunds at any TickeNet office starting April 5.

"The anticipated Enrique Iglesias show will not be staged in Manila due to an unavoidable reason," the local promoter said in a statement.

For details on the refund, call 911-5555.

"We take full responsibility for the outcome of the event and do not blame anyone or any other market. As an entertainment company, whatever causes an event to be canceled is due to our failings," The Star quoted Harold Learmond-Criqui of LCM Group as saying.

Apology

"We would like to apologize to ticket purchasers, fans and the Malaysian public for failing to fulfill our objective (in bringing) the artist to the country," Learmond-Criqui had said.

"7" is Iglesias' seventh album, but is his third in English. The album's first single, the passionate ballad "Addicted," was composed during a pause in a 100-date 2002 tour that took him throughout the US, Europe and the Middle East.

Enrique is the third child of international singer Julio Iglesias and Philippines-born ex-model Isabel Preysler.

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Jaded	*Mest*	**TONE JADED**
Just A Little	*Play*	**TONE JUSTA**
Simply Being Loved	*BT*	**TONE SIMPLYBE**
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Outrageous	*Britney Spears*	**TONE OUTRA**
To Be With You	*Westlife*	**TONE 2BEWITH**

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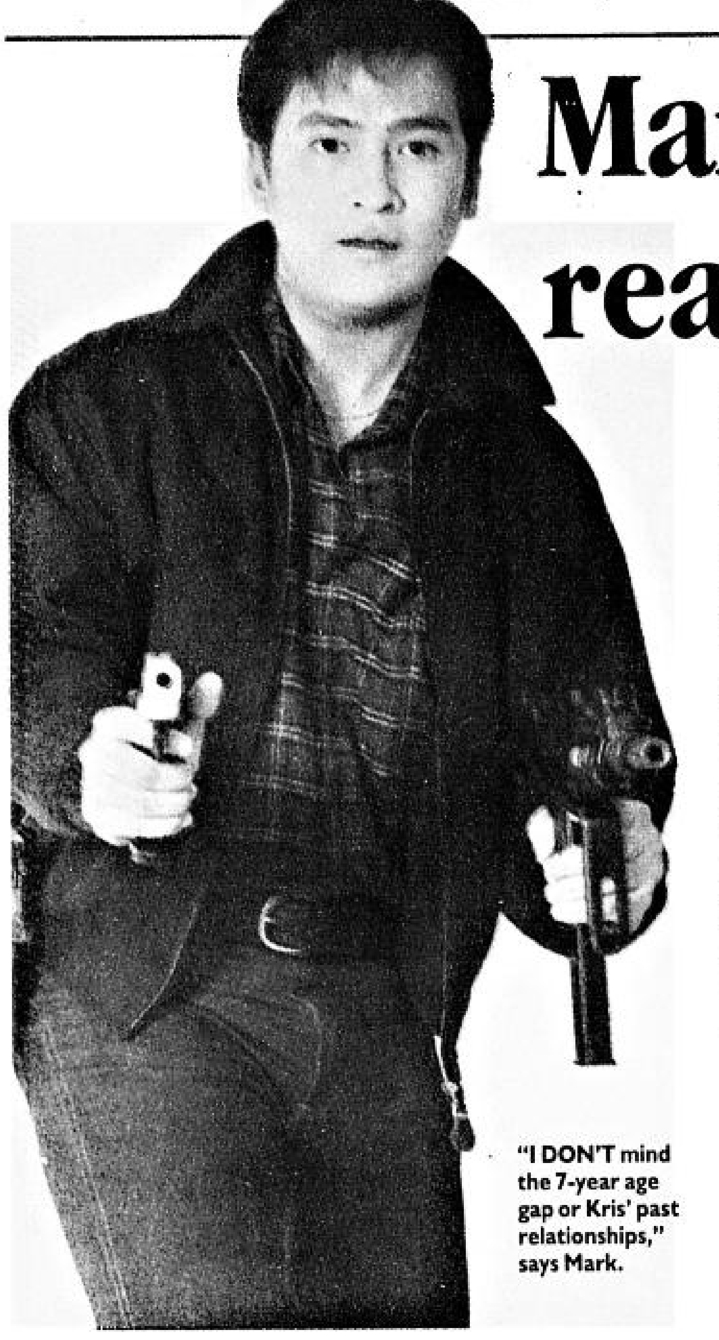
Mark Lapid: I have not reached 1st base with Kris


"I DON'T mind the 7-year age gap or Kris' past relationships," says Mark.

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY of San Fernando—Here's the buzz.

He does not mind that his father, Pampanga Gov. Manuel Lapid, was the first man to have kissed his object of affection, Kris Aquino, onscreen.

Pampanga Board Member Mark Lapid, the governor's son, also said that the age gap between Kris and himself does not bother him.

More important, the young Lapid declared that he doesn't mind her past relationships.

"I don't mind the age gap or her past relationships. She's sweet and kind, honest," Mark said, confirming earlier reports that he's courting the youngest daughter of former President Cory Aquino.

Mark, 25, a management graduate, is seven years younger than Kris, who was involved in a tumultuous relationship with Parañaque City Mayor Joey Marquez.

First screen kiss

Kris had admitted in the show biz talk show "The Buzz" last Sunday that she is not yet over the Parañaque City mayor. She also said in the show that she and Joey had discussed Mark's courtship.

The young Lapid, a former seminarian, is now running for Pampanga governor.

He told INQUIRER Entertainment that he had not been bothered by the kiss between his father and Kris.

"It's just in the movie," Mark said of the kissing scene in the 1998 action flick "Geron Olivar."

In the movie, the older Lapid played the role of a crime-busting policeman. Kris acted the part of a reporter. Lapid was then serving his first term as governor.

Reached by phone in Cebu City, Governor Lapid, who is running for senator under the administration coalition K-4, said the "very short" kiss on the lips of Aquino took more than five takes.

"Kris was very nervous. I tried to make her comfortable. It turned out to be okay," he recalled.

Lapid said the actress was conscious about how her mother would react to the kiss.

Mark, the governor's eldest son by Marissa Tadeo, said he first met Kris in Laguna last February during the campaign salvo of K-4 senatorial candidates.

But Mark admitted that he has yet to reach "first base" with Kris, but did not elaborate.

All that he had done in the last three weeks, he said, was to tell Kris how he "felt" about her. He did not give details, though.

Own mind

"Paglolon ke pu talaga (I'm really courting her), Ma'am," he told INQUIRER Entertainment in a telephone interview.

He said that in the last three years, he has had no girlfriend after he and beauty queen Darlene Carbungco broke off. Darlene, a Kapampangan, was crowned Mutya ng Pilipinas in 2002.

Governor Lapid said his son has a mind of his own.

"I cannot dictate on my son. I have always taught him to think and live independently. He goes where he is most happy," the governor said in Kapampangan.

In a previous interview after he was told that Mark is showing signs that like his father, he could charm the women easily, the governor paused, then replied, "No." "(Mark's) a quiet boy," he said.

KRIS: Not yet over ex-boyfriend Joey. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Less is more

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WHY do we pay good money to watch a horror or suspense flick that will scare us out of our wits? Makers of scary movies agree that the sweet relief after the cinematic danger has passed is a particularly strong attraction.

It's like horror films give us the chance to safely "rehearse" for the really scary moments in our own lives. We know that the dangerous or shocking experience onscreen isn't real, so we can use it as an indication of how we'll react when fear strikes our hearts in actuality.

Old Greek dramatists called it "catharsis," or purging of emotions, the blessed feeling of relief after a stressfully conflicted experience. The point is, the feeling wouldn't be as sweet if the conflict weren't so fearfully compelling.

The feeling is also one of empathy for the character being subjected to so much stress, the more intense the sense of feeling-for.

But coming up with a really scary movie takes much more than just a dead body in the closet and a killer lurking in the shadows, hunting down his next victim.

It requires more than just haunted houses, doors creaking, the sound of chains being dragged, ghosts crawling out of coffins, vampires baring their incisors, zombies in hot pursuit, giant insects laying waste to entire cities, etc.!

In fact, some masters of the horror film genre insist that the operative principle for scary filmmaking should be: less is more. It's important not to pile up the horror effects, because the viewer will feel too swamped to be really terrified.

They say that it's important to be selective, to terrorize viewers only occasionally, so the feeling of escalating dread can periodically build up.

They stipulate that, in a movie's first few minutes, the "rules" of the horror "game" have to be established, so viewers know how they are supposed to react.

If the reference points are clearly set, moviegoers will enthusiastically cooperate in the scarifying experience. If they aren't, the audience's reactions will be tentative at best.

It's also essential that a feeling of dread be established early in the storytelling. With that mood in place, even seemingly ordinary events will be viewed with a suspicious eye by the insecure viewer.

Other terror totems: show ghosts or killers only sparingly, so the terrified viewer uses his imagination and comes up with something more horrific than reality itself.

Come up with some "red herrings" to mislead viewers, and thus add to their feelings of insecurity and helplessness in the face of evil or spooky paranormal events.

Finally, make sure that viewers' fears are assuaged after the scary finale, to give them the sweet relief that the whole experience has been designed to effect in the first place!

'Starsky & Hutch'

IN THE film version of the hit TV series, "Starsky & Hutch," **Ben Stiller** plays tough undercover cop David Starsky, while **Owen Wilson** is his partner, fun-loving detective Ken Hutchinson.

As soon as the two mismatched crime fighters are brought together, a "floater" turns up on the Bay City coastline. As the investigators begin to unravel the mystifying murder case, all signs point at wealthy businessman Reese Feldman (**Vince Vaughn**), but they just can't seem to build a case against him.

The unlikely duo will have to use their best undercover sleuthing skills and street smarts to solve the baffling crime. Are they up to it? It looks like rough, clumsy going there for awhile, but success is only a matter of time.

Silver jubilee

CLASS 1979 of the high school department of St. Mary's College of Quezon City celebrates its silver jubilee this July. Members of the Marian Class of 1979 are urged to call **Agnes Zapanta-Bengco** at 427-2771 or 0917-5305170, or **Joy Cirineo** at 628-0575 or 0917-5311984.

Did you know?

DID YOU KNOW...

ACTRESS**Susan Roces**, wife of presidential candidate **Fernando Poe Jr.**, was on the road as early as 6 a.m. last week to join her husband in his campaign sorties in Laguna. After visiting the towns of Pila, Sta. Cruz, Pagsanjan, Lumban, Paete, Magdalena and Liliw, Susan was so tired from walking that she traded her shoes for a pair of slippers that she herself bought from a wet market in Liliw. After all, the town is known for its fashionable footwear.

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POP HITS

1	Redblooded Woman	Kylie Minogue	TONE REDBLOOD
2	Addicted	Enrique Iglesias	TONE ADDICTED
3	Toxic	Britney Spears	TONE TOXIC
4	I Promise I Will	Stacie Orrico	TONE IPROMISE
5	I'll Be	Edwin McCain	TONE IBE
6	Something's Missing	John Mayer	TONE SMISSING
7	The Voice Within	Christina Aguilera	TONE VOICEW
8	Guilty	Blue	TONE GUILTY
9	If You're Not The One	Daniel Bedingfield	TONE IFYOURNOT
10	Do I Need A Reason	D'Sound	TONE DOINEED

R&B HITS

1	Me, Myself And I	Beyonce	TONE MEMYSELF
2	All I Have	J. Lopez and LL Cool J	TONE ALLIHAVE
3	No Letting Go	Wayne Wonder	TONE NOLET
4	I Know What You Want	M. Carey & B. Rhymes	TONE IKNOWAT
5	So Into You	Fabolous And Ashanti	TONE INTOU
6	Rain On Me	Ashanti	TONE RAINON1
7	I Want You	Thalia And Fat Joe	TONE IWANTU
8	You Don't Know My Name	Alicia Keys	TONE YOUDONT
9	Love's Divine	Seal	TONE LOVESDIV
10	Rock The Boat	Aaliyah	TONE ROCKTHE

ROCK HITS

1	You Give Love A Bad Name	Bon Jovi	TONE BADNAME
2	Harder To Breathe	Maroon 5	TONE HARDER
3	Unwell	Matchbox 20	TONE UNWELL
4	All Apologies	Nirvana	TONE ALLAPOLO
5	We Are The Champions	Queen	TONE CHAMPIONS
6	Have It All	Foo Fighters	TONE HAVIT2
7	My Immortal	Evanescence	TONE IMMORTAL
8	Numb	Linkin Park	TONE NUMB
9	Behind Blue Eyes	Limp Bizkit	TONE BEHINDB
10	Teenage Dirtbag	Wheatus	TONE TEENAGE

OPM HITS

1	Alam Kong Di Ako, Okey Lang	Bayani Agbayani	TONE OKEYLANG
2	Ms. Flawless	Angelica Jones	TONE FLAW
3	Otso-otso	Bayani Agbayani	TONE OTSO
4	Ayoko Na Sa'yo	Mahal & Mura	TONE AYOKO
5	Bakit Pa Ba	Jay-R	TONE BAKITPABA
6	Kung Ako Na Lang Sana	Bituin Escalante	TONE KUNGAKO
7	Stop Think	Aliya Parcs	TONE STOP
8	Forever's Not Enough	Sarah Geronimo	TONE 4EVERSNOT
9	Kailan Ka Darating	W. Cornejo & R. Alejandro	TONE KAILANKA
10	Kabit Na	Bridge	TONE KABIT

TOP LOGOS
1 LOGO PAMELAWAN
2 LOGO JESUS8
3 LOGO ANIMELUV
4 LOGO DRAGON10
5 LOGO KISS7
6 LOGO DOLPHINS1
7 LOGO MYROSE
8 LOGO SEXYG
9 LOGO MERMAID
10 LOGO TRIBAL2
11 LOGO SEXYDAW
12 LOGO FLOWILY
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Hike in prices of basic goods looms

By Clarissa S. Batino and Doris C. Dumlao

THE MACAPAGAL administration's decision to increase jeepney fares by 75 centavos would jack up inflation by 35 basis points and push the prices of basic commodities higher, according to Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri.

Neri clarified, however, that higher transport fares should not drastically drive inflation rate higher than the government's target of between 4 and 5 percent this year unless prices shoot up unreasonably or a substantial wage increase would be approved.

The director general of the National Economic and Development Authority said that inflation stayed manageable at between 3.5 and 4 percent in March but once the full impact of the fare increase is felt in the succeeding months, inflation could go up modestly.

"Our estimate is that for every peso fare hike, inflation would increase by 50 basis points. So the 63-centavo fare that would effectively cost consumers about 75 centavos more would have an impact of about 35 basis points to inflation," the Neda chief said.

The Land Transportation Regulatory and Franchising Board would issue a new fare matrix within the week, which would bring back the minimum fare distance to 4 kilometers instead of 5 kilometers.

In effect, the minimum jeepney fare would still be P4 but on the first 4 kilometers. Every succeeding kilometer is charged an additional 63 centavos, thus the new fare scheme of P4.63 on the first 5 kilometers.

In end-2000, the LTFRB granted jeepney groups a 50-centavo fare increase but changed the minimum fare distance to the first 5 kms.

Inflation, or the rate at which prices of goods and services go up, stood at 3.4 percent in January and February using the 1994 consumer price index. Using 2000 as base year, inflation eased to 4 percent in February from 4.1 percent in January. The 4-5 percent inflation target this year is based on 1994 prices.

Every time the inflation rate goes up, the peso buys a lesser amount of goods.

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza earlier said the government's reluctance to act on the jeepney groups' petition for a P1 provisional fare increase and a P1.50 petition for a regular fare increase on the first 5 kms plus 20 centavos on each succeeding kilometer would create pressure on wages and food prices.

Mendoza said the labor department was worried that a fare adjustment would push labor groups to demand a wage increase. When this happens, he said the trade department feared that shops would close and jobs would be lost as businesses could not finance the increase production cost.

Transport groups argued that a P1 fare increase should only have a slight impact on a minimum wage

HIKE/B5

INDICATORS

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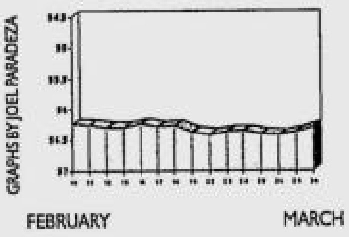


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 56.30= $1

As of 5 p.m., March 30, 2004

Y 105.77 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 30, 2004

GOLD: $417.30-417.80

per ounce Hong Kong, March 30, 2004

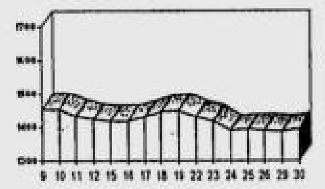
INTEREST RATES

March 30, 2004-MART1 Rates Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 30-Mar-04	MART1 29-Mar-04
1 Month	8.1591	8.0417
3 Months	8.4321	8.2821
6 Months	9.2321	9.2038
1 Year	9.9589	9.95
2 Years	10.6768	10.6768
3 Years	11.4393	11.4538
4 Years	11.7232	11.725
5 Years	12.1589	12.1643
7 Years	12.4375	12.4554
10 Years	12.6308	12.6115
20 Years	13.0089	13
25 Years	13.2732	12.275

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

PLDT, SM Prime lead market rise

STOCKS ended higher yesterday, after two days of losses, due to interest in select blue chips such as dominant telecoms firm PLDT and mall developer SM Prime Holdings Inc.

PLDT, a quarter owned by Hong Kong's First Pacific Co. Ltd., jumped P20, or 2.21 percent, to P925.

Analysts said PLDT buying was inspired by a projection by the company chair last Friday that the firm might exceed its P18-billion profit target in 2004 due to strong revenues.

SM Prime, the country's biggest mall developer with 17 shopping centres nationwide, rose 3.64 percent, or 20 centavos, to P5.70.

SM Prime—controlled by Chinese-Filipino tycoon Henry Sy—said on Monday its net profit rose 8 percent in 2003 to P4.2 billion. It also planned to open two new malls this year.

"This is a technical rebound. The investors chose stocks that have stories to tell and which should merit a little buy," said AB Capital economic analyst Jose Vistan.

The main index added 7.87 points, or 0.57 percent, at 1,396.02 points. The market has fallen 3.21 percent so far this year.

Turnover rose to P401.67 million from Monday's P275.52 million.

Vistan said he expected the market to rise again in the next session but political anxieties ahead of the May 10 national election will temper gains.

"Players are cautious ahead of the Easter holidays and political developments. We see the market moving within the 1,350 and 1,420 range," he said.

Pilipino Telephone Corp. (Piltel), 45-percent owned by PLDT and the country's third-largest mobile firm, rose 2.41 percent, or 4 centavos, to P1.70.

PLDT's banner mobile firm Smart Communications Inc. said last week it wanted to buy Piltel's debt from its creditors and buy the parent firm's 45-percent stake in the smaller affiliate. *Reuters*

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Kabutihan sa Nakararami Hindi sa Iilan Lang

(Bukas na Liham sa Mahal na Pangulong Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo)

Mahal na Pangulo,

Kamakailan napapabalita po sa mga pahayagan na may mahigpit na kahilingan ang nagmamay-ari ngayon ng National Steel Corporation (NSC) na itaas hanggang sa 30% ang tarifa sa mga produktong kanila pang gagawin.

Lubha po itong nakababahala...

Sapagkat kasunod po ng balitang ito, nagpahayag ang mga Meat Processors, Coconut Oil Refiners at Food Manufacturers na gumagamit ng lata yari sa tinplates, na kapag tinaasan ang tarifa nito gaya ng hinihiling ng NSC, tiyak na tataas din ang kanilang cost of production, at natural saan nila ipapasa ang karagdagan nilang gastos? SA AMING WALANG KALABAN-LABANG CONSUMERS!

Nagbabala din po ang mga pinuno ng tinatawag na downstream steel industry o mga manlilikha ng mga produkto na ang hilaw na materyales ay galing sa bakal, na tiyak na aakyat hanggang 27% ang presyo ng kanilang produkto tulad ng steel bars, LPG tanks, steel pipes, jeepney at tricycle bodies, GI sheets na pang roofing, tin cans, atbp sa sandaling itaas ang tarifa ng kanilang raw materials. Ito ay makakaantala din sa mga proyekto ng gobyerno lalo na ang low cost housing.

Kami po ay marami nang pinapasan na pagtaas ng presyo, ang iba ay talagang hindi maiiwasan kaya't handa kaming magtiis ngunit itong panukala ng NSC ay tiyak na magpapalipad sa presyo ng napakaraming bilihing gamit ng milyong pilipino ngunit, hindi tulad ng iba, ito'y maaaring maiwasan.

Mahal na Pangulo, nakikiusap po kami. Marami pa pong ibang paraan para tulungan ang NSC na lumago at lumaki, pero huwag sanang kapakanan ng iilan ay mangibabaw sa kapakanan ng nakararami. At ganyan ang gustong mangyari ng NSC. At huwag po sana ninyo itong payagan, mahal na Pangulo.

Mabuhay po kayo at handog namin sa inyo ang aming panalangin.

Lubos na gumagalang,

ATTY. FERDINAND A. BACORRO
Executive Vice-President
CONFEDERATION OF HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION FOR REFORMS IN GOVERNANCE AND ENVIRONMENT
(CHARGE-HOMEOWNERS, INC.)

MR. JOSE P. PEPITO, President
NATIONWIDE ASSOCIATION OF CONSUMERS, INC. (NACI)

ATTY. QUIRINO A. MARQUINEZ, President
CONSUMERS UNION OF THE PHILIPPINES

ATTY. MANUEL SERRANO
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RFM sees return to profit

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

LISTED food manufacturer RFM Corp. hopes to return to profit this year due to the expected growth in its branded food business.

Jose A. Concepcion III, president of RFM, said he was optimistic that efforts to build its consumer food brands this year would help boost the listed firm's operations.

Sources estimated that based on audited figures, RFM's net losses amounted to P250 million last year.

RFM's consumer brands would include "Selecta Moo" (ready-to-drink milk products), "Sunkist" (ready-to-drink and powdered juices line), "Fiesta" pasta products, "White King" flour mixes and "Swift" chilled and canned meats.

"We should break even this year. Hopefully next year if we consolidate profit of the property (unit), but I am not counting that yet, I'm not even counting the flour business or even chicken, we're just talking of the branded food business which I believe is the future of RFM," Concepcion told the INQUIRER.

Sources said the food company was expected to boost its revenues to P6 billion this year from roughly P4.2 billion in 2003.

Concepcion also said the company plans to be more focused on its core businesses.

He expected its canned meat arm Swift Foods to generate profits this year after recovering from the bird flu scare, and reversing losses of roughly P120 million last year.

Concepcion said that while Swift has already been spun off as a separate unit,

RFM/ B5

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 30, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.1	3.1	3	3	18,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.75	17	16.75	17	69,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	43.5	43.5	43	43	520,800
China Banking Corp.	665	665	665	665	450
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	38	38	37.5	38	104,200
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.54	0.55	0.54	0.55	100,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	24	24	23.5	23.5	187,700
Philippine National Bank	23	23	23	23	800
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	27	27	10,100
Security Bank Corp.	16.25	16.25	15.75	15.75	23,800
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1	1	1	1	50,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2020	2070	2020	2070	4,100
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	135	135	135	135	400
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1485	1485	1485	1485	930
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	18.25	18.75	18.25	18.75	175,400
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.62	0.62	0.61	0.61	1,250,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	790	790	785	790	21,530
Ipeople Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	15,899,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	1,000,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.55	2.6	2.55	2.6	4,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.68	1.7	1.68	1.7	6,171,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co	0.09	0.15	0.09	0.15	130,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	910	925	910	925	72,120
Philweb Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	18,100,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	16	16.25	16	16	22,300
Manila Electric Co. B	25	25.5	24	24	1,640,600
Petron Corp.	2.65	2.7	2.65	2.65	3,259,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	50,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3	3	3	3	2,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	40,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	387,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3	3	2.95	3	6,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	28.5	28.5	28	28	1,500
RFM Corp.	0.61	0.62	0.59	0.59	160,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56	56.5	56	56.5	117,400
San Miguel Corp. B	69.5	69.5	69	69.5	29,600
Universal Robina Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	348,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	250,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	13,808,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3	3	3	3	290,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1	1	1	1	10,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	35,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.49	0.5	0.48	0.48	5,170,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.1	0.1	400,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	200,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.039	0.039	0.039	0.039	100,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.02	0.02	0.018	0.018	1,400,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1	1	1	1	10,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	19.75	20.25	19.75	20	263,800
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	414,000
Medco Holdings	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	100,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	4,450,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.245	0.25	2,370,000
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	61,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	60,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	179,900
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	8,700,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1	1.16	1	1.16	12,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	10,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.5	0.52	0.5	0.52	1,110,000
Manila Jockey Club	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	3,323,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	18.5	19	18.5	19	86,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U -	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	4,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,700
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	3,500
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	5,521,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	100,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	100,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	1,950,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.155	0.16	0.155	0.16	20,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	85,000
SM Development Corp.	1	1	1	1	15,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.5	5.7	5.5	5.7	4,189,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	150,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	4,190,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	3,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	200,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.4	0.42	0.4	0.42	470,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	31,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.03	200,000

DISCLOSURES

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. announced the election of Cesar Bautista as director of the company. Also, the company will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 29, 8 a.m. at Studio 1 of ABS-CBN Broadcasting Centre Complex, Quezon City. Stockholders of record as of March 15 will be entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

BACNOTAN Consolidated Industries Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 20, 4 p.m. at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel. Record date is on April 20.

* * *

FILIPINO Fund Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 8, 9 a.m. with record date on April 5.

* * *

DIGITAL Telecommunications Philippines Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 31, 10 a.m. at the Amorsolo Ballroom of Holiday Inn Galleria Manila. Record date is on April 15.

* * *

F & J Prince Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 28.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Seven Corp. clarified that its purchase of Binggo Convenience Stores from Jollimart Philippines Corp. include leasehold rights, building and building improvements, equipment, furniture and fixtures. And out of the 39 stores to be bought, 35 will be converted into 7-Eleven stores.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Company disclosed the resignation of Taketo Suzuki as director. Shigeru Yoshida was elected to replace him.

* * *

MANILA Electric Company will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 25, 9 a.m. at the Meralco Theater, Lopez Building, Pasig City. Stockholders of record as of March 1 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

NEGROS Navigation Company Inc. disclosed the resignation of Enrique Filamor as director of the company. Elected to replace him was Jose Ma. Lim. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

March 30, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.822233	1.000000	56.3850
Japan	Yen	0.007792	0.009477	0.5344
United Kingdom	Pound	1.496218	1.819700	102.6038
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.105470	0.128273	7.2327
Switzerland	Franc	0.640469	0.778938	43.9204
Canada	Dollar	0.628475	0.764351	43.0979
Singapore	Dollar	0.486759	0.591996	33.3797
Australia	Dollar	0.614938	0.747887	42.1696
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.181106	2.652661	149.5703
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.219274	0.266681	15.0368
Brunei	Dollar	0.485322	0.590249	33.2812
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000095	0.000116	0.0065
Thailand	Baht	0.020784	0.025278	1.4253
UAE	Dirham	0.223871	0.272272	15.3521
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.216200	68.5754
Argentina	Peso	0.285250	0.346921	19.5611
Brazil	Real	0.280052	0.340599	19.2047
Denmark	Kroner	0.134334	0.163377	9.2120
India	Rupee	0.018726	0.022774	1.2841
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.216383	0.263165	14.8386
Mexico	New Peso	0.073348	0.089206	5.0299
New Zealand	Dollar	0.536251	0.652188	36.7736
Norway	Kroner	0.118744	0.144417	8.1430
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014318	0.017413	0.9818
South Africa	Rand	0.129270	0.157218	8.8647
Korea	Won	0.000710	0.000864	0.0487
Sweden	Kroner	0.107907	0.131237	7.3998
Syria	Pound	0.018636	0.022665	1.2780
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024878	0.030257	1.7060
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000429	0.000522	0.0294

Oil firms weigh options amid rising crude prices

By Abigail L. Ho

OIL firms have adopted a wait-and-see attitude with regard to the possible movement of local pump prices in the coming weeks, even while world market prices remained high.

The country's three biggest oil player-sPetron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Caltex Philippines Inc.—are all just evaluating movements in the world market and have not advised as to when another price increase will take place.

"While the prices of crude and finished products remain at high levels, management continues to monitor the market and have no plans as of yet to adjust prices," Shell general manager for external affairs Roberto Kanapi said in an interview yesterday.

New players under the Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association (IPPCA) are also closely monitoring movements in the world market without declaring a specific time frame for another price increase.

IPPCA chair Fernando Martinez said in another interview that they had chosen to adopt a wait-and-see attitude even while nursing under-recoveries of 60 centavos per liter for gasoline and 90 centavos per liter for diesel.

Consumer and Oil Price Watch chair Raul Concepcion said in a news briefing Monday that pump prices of gasoline and the socially sensitive diesel would surely rise next month due to escalating prices in the world market.

Martinez, however, said that while another increase could be in the offing, this should not necessarily take place in April.

"We can't say that for certain, if the increase will take place in April. We're just closely monitoring the market, hoping that prices will soon improve," he said.

The benchmark Dubai crude that oil refiners like Shell and Petron used in pricing their products soared to its highest level since the United States waged war on Iraq at $31.90 a barrel in March 24.

At the height of the US-Iraq war, Dubai crude shot up to $31.18 a barrel.

Its month-to-date average is now pegged at $30.91 per barrel, $2.30 more than the February average of $28.61 per barrel.

Prices of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for finished products is now averaging at $44.02 per barrel compared with the February average of $39.87 per barrel.

MOPS-based diesel, on the other hand, posted a slight improvement to a month-to-date average of $38.29 per barrel from $38.80 per barrel last month.

With the current high prices of petroleum products both here and abroad, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. appealed to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to put off its planned production cut of 2.5 million barrels a day starting April 1.

"Opec must understand that the present high oil prices are already untenable. We are urging Opec to seriously consider postponing their agreed production cut to arrest any further increase in global oil prices," he said in a statement yesterday.

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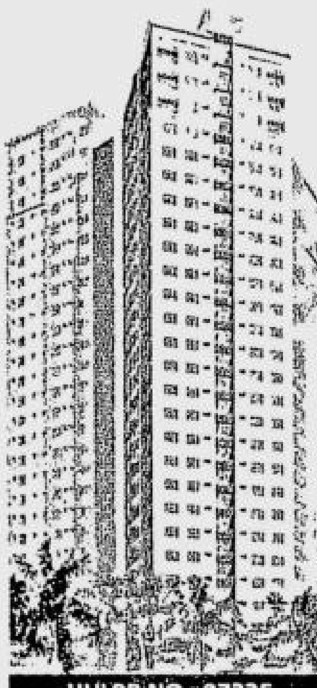

PRICE MONITOR

Bantay Bilihin In Metro Manila

Bantay Bilihin is the Department of Trade and Industry's program that aims to address various components of price and supply stabilization. This price monitoring guide is the consumer's reference on the average prices of selected basic goods and prime commodities. The items listed below are some of the most common necessities we buy.

DTI and the Department of Agriculture monitor around 36 select markets in Metro Manila that are accessible and with heavy consumer traffic and trading activity.

Prices in different markets may be higher or lower than the average price.

BASIC & PRIME COMMODITIES (Monitored by DTI)	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE	AVERAGE PRICE (As of March 29, 2004)	PRICE RANGE (As of March 29, 2004)		AVERAGE PRICE A Month Ago (February 2004)
Canned Fish (155g)			7.00	10.00	
555	-	8.11			8.16
Youngstown	-	8.79			8.74
Hakata	-	7.13			8.14
Master	-	8.27			8.23
Ligo	-	8.44			8.41
Instant Noodles (Chicken/55g)			4.00	5.75	
Lucky Me	-	4.73			4.70
Maggi	5.25	5.16			5.18
Payless	-	4.34			4.23
Nissin's Ramen	-	4.98			4.98
Powdered Filled Milk (180g)			29.25	36.00	
Alaska	36.00	33.78			31.94
Bear Brand	36.00	34.07			32.12
Coffee (25g Refill)			10.75	15.50	
Blend 45	-	12.36			12.11
Nescafe	14.40	14.36			14.23
Café Puro	-	12.67			12.70
Great Taste	-	13.00			12.96
Laundry Soap (400g)			21.75	27.00	
Perla	24.00	24.25			24.15
Wheel	22.00	22.64			22.64
Detergent Bar (480g)			13.00	25.00	
Surf	14.20	14.74			14.75
Mr Clean	-	14.40			14.63
Tide	20.00	22.95			23.15
Breeze	23.95	23.38			23.38

COMMODITY (Monitored by DA-BAS)	AVERAGE PRICE (March 25, 2004)	AVERAGE PRICE A Week Ago (March 18, 2004)	AVERAGE PRICE A Month Ago (February 2004)
Meat and Poultry			
Beef Brisket (per kilo)	143.08	143.68	142.49
Egg (Medium/per piece)	3.59	3.56	3.36
Fish (per kilo)			
Bangus	92.00	93.45	90.43
Tilapia	69.80	70.04	78.82
Galunggong	73.50	75.91	67.96
Rice (per kilo)			
Ordinary	18.00	18.60	18.60
Special	22.42	22.42	22.15
Premium	25.70	25.70	25.69
Fancy	32.76	32.76	32.80
Sugar (per kilo)			
Refined	26.53	26.53	26.81
Brown	22.40	22.40	22.73

MEAT AND POULTRY (Monitored by DA-BAI)	FARMGATE PRICE As of March 29, 2004 (Price per Kilo)	WHOLESALE PRICE As of March 29, 2004 (Price per Kilo)	AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE As of March 29, 2004 (Price per Kilo)
Chicken (Dressed)	51.00	71.25	86.43
Pork (Liempo)	87.69	113.31	143.08

CEMENT (40kg Bag)	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE (Pick Up & Cash Price per Bag as of March, 2004)	AVERAGE PRICE (Per Bag, as of Mar 29, 2004)
Island	125.00	130.00
Union	125.00	131.00

For inquiries, write or call:
DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
Bureau of Trade Regulation and Consumer Protection
2/F Trade and Industry Building, 361 Gen. J. Puyat Ave., Makati City 1200
Tel.: 8977-DTI • Website: www.dti.gov.ph • Text: type DTI <space><your message>send to 2920
For Meat and Poultry, call the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Animal Industry- 920-3906
For other Agricultural Commodities, call the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics--371-2078

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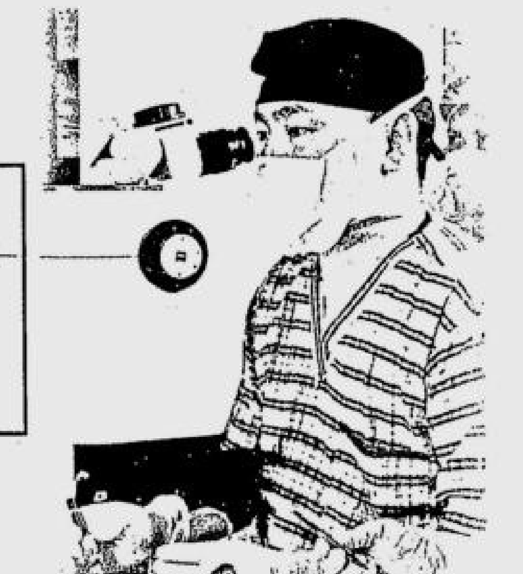

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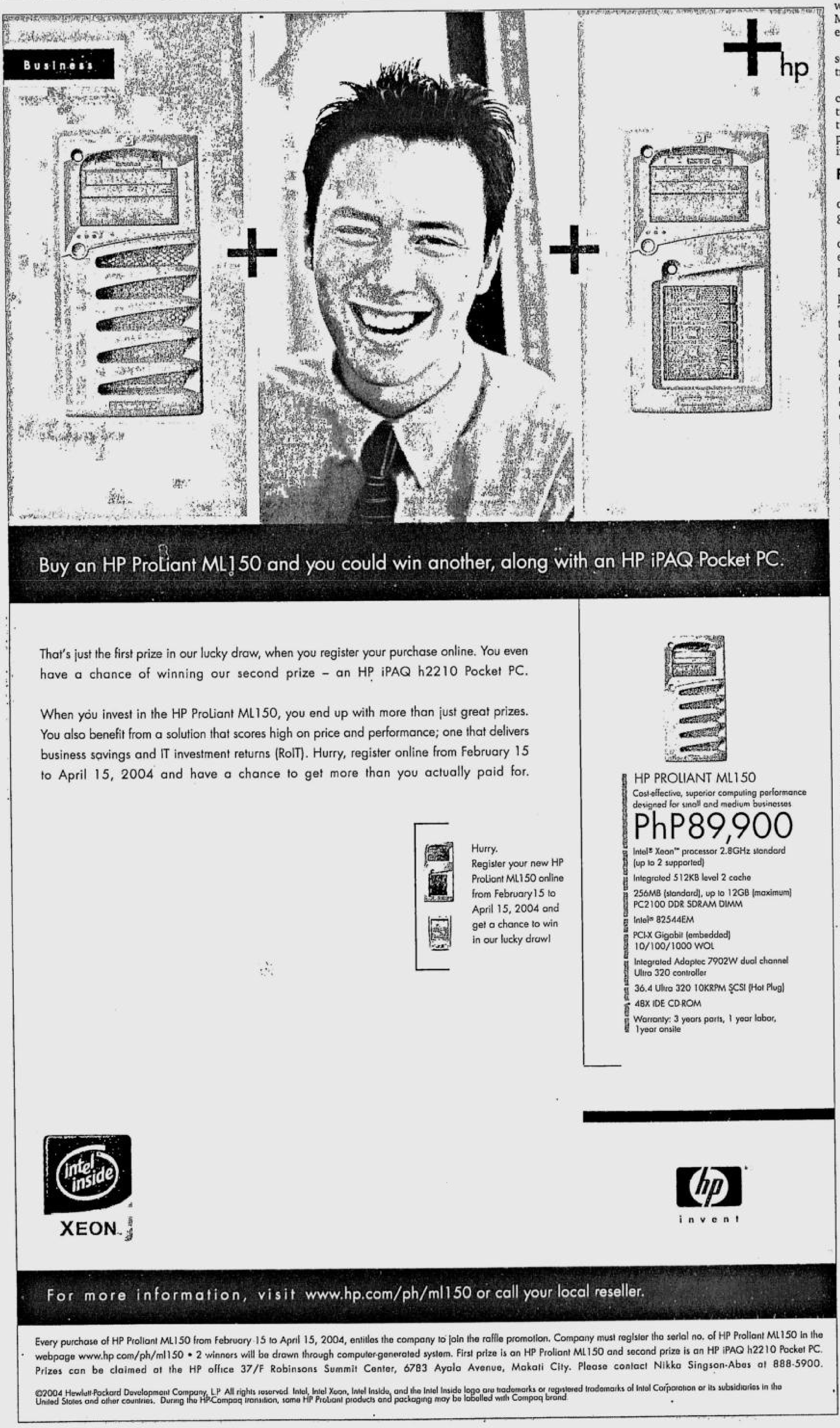
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PSE trade of Nenaco shares suspended

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez and Clarissa S. Batino

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange yesterday suspended trade in shares of shipping firm Negros Navigation Co. (Nenaco) after it filed for corporate rehabilitation and debt payment suspension.

Nenaco is 98 percent owned by property firm Metro Pacific Corp., local flagship of Hong Kong's First Pacific Company Ltd.

Nenaco last traded on March 23 and closed at 37 centavos apiece. No trade on the stock was recorded since Wednesday last week. Metro Pacific was last traded on March 26 and ended at 25 centavos.

Nenaco officials stressed that all ship schedules for passenger and freight cargo traffic remain unaffected.

In a memo to traders, officials of the exchange said that there would be an "indefinite trading suspension on the company's securities effective March 30 due to its filing for corporate rehabilitation program with prayer for immediate suspension of debt payments."

P2.5 billion debt

Nenaco on Monday filed the petition for corporate rehabilitation before a Manila regional trial court.

In a statement, Metro Pacific said that a court-approved rehabilitation program will enable Nenaco to address debts and trade payables amounting to P2.5 billion.

Nenaco's board of directors on Monday approved the plan in a special stockholders meeting. The board members, in a press statement, said that the court petition was in the best interest of the company, its creditors and stakeholders.

Under PSE rules on listing and disclosures, trade in shares of a listed company is immediately suspended as soon as the firm files a petition seeking a suspension of debt payments, or when it becomes the subject of legal proceedings under the Insolvency law.

Discredit

Nenaco officials have pinned the blame for its corporate woes on its competitor, Aboitiz Transport Systems Corp.

Nenaco and the Aboitiz shipping line compete for passengers in various sea lanes throughout the country.

Nenaco said that Aboitiz's efforts to discredit Nenaco had affected its sales, operations and ability to settle its debt.

The Aboitiz family firm is a partner of Japanese ship builder Tsuneishi Heavy Industries (Cebu). Nenaco owes Tsuneishi about P111 million for dry-docking services and ship repair.

Nenaco officials last week claimed that they were on the verge of closing a deal with prospective investors willing to infuse P600 million in fresh equity when Tsuneishi allegedly made a move to discredit Nenaco.

Nenaco officials said that on Mar. 20, Tsuneishi's lawyers Serafin Rivera and Pablo Castillo attempted to seize a Nenaco ship with 700 passengers on board to force the immediate payment of P35 million in past accounts.

Nenaco said that it had already paid Tsuneishi P27 million for previous services and had been anticipating an amicable renegotiation of the payment terms.

Garnishment proceedings

But Tsuneishi officials denied claims of partial settlement, adding that they have not been paid since 2002.

The Aboitiz and Tsuneishi Group also denied that they have closed the doors on Nenaco, saying instead that the inter-island company was given enough time to work out the payment of its debt.

Two weeks ago, Tsuneishi had asked a Cebu court to attach a Nenaco vessel as payment for the unpaid dues. Tsuneishi also initiated garnishment proceedings on Nenaco's account with Prudential Bank.

The notice of garnishment served last March 12 was meant to allow Tsuneishi to attach "all goods, effects, interests, credits, money, stocks, shares and other personal possession," to cover for part of Nenaco's debts to the Japanese company.

Admiralty law

Tsuneishi invoked the Admiralty Law in asking the court to seize the vessel as settlement for P110 million in unpaid accounts.

Tsuneishi later asked the court to cite Nenaco and port officials, and hold them liable for indirect contempt, for refusing to surrender the vessel "St. Peter the Apostle," which was the subject of a garnishment case.

Nenaco sources said the ship that was being seized—"the St. Peter the Apostle"—was worth double or triple the amount of debt being collected.

In a recent disclosure to the stock exchange recently, Nenaco president Conrado Carballo questioned the motive behind the filing of the case, saying the move to seize the company's asset was not about paying a debt.

Sources separately said Nenaco's assets was being seized to allegedly complement the Aboitiz flagship shipping company, Aboitiz Transport, and fortify its strong hold on the shipping market.

A spokesperson for the Aboitiz Group denied the claim, calling it "a lie."

Fernando flu virus

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

THE GOOD news about the CalPERS pullout brouhaha is that the Philippines is but a hairline away from being reinstated as an investment destination.

The bad news is that the CalPERS negative rating on the Philippines had indeed been partly based on a Makati Business Club survey.

According to the government grapevine, as a result of the briefings given by visiting Philippine teams, the latest of which was last week, CalPERS' investment consultant has now upgraded the Philippine rating from 1.87 to 1.99.

The new rating, which places the Philippines on the same level as India and Thailand, is 1/100 short of the minimum 2.0-passing grade to remain an investment destination for the multibillion-dollar funds of the California Public Employees' Retirement System. Out of those billions, a mere $67 million is supposedly invested in the local market among Philippine blue chips, spread ironically among key MBC member companies.

If we believe the same grapevine, Wilshire Associates, the $1-million-a-year CalPERS investment research consultant, has been relying on pre-2001 securities data on the Philippines, when the local market was a playground for the likes of Dante Tan and his BW gang, to red flag the country.

With regard to the corruption climate, Wilshire apparently relied on a global competitiveness survey conducted by our very own Makati Business Club, although MBC executive director Guillermo Luz was quick to clarify that the club had not given any briefing to Wilshire or any of its research sub-contractors as reported in this column Monday.

What the MBC did was to administer the survey among member firms and ship the survey results to the World Economic Forum, whose results were apparently then picked up by Wilshire Associates to lump the Philippines among the economic plagues.

"The survey results (were) actually processed in Geneva by the WEF and not by the MBC," Luz said.

Since it was the source of the negative report, the MBC was invited to join the combined Bangko Sentral-Department of Finance-Securities and Exchange Commission-Supreme Court mission in October to explain before CalPERS and Wilshire the implications of the recent investment, regulatory and judicial reforms that Manila had undertaken.

But nobody from MBC could join the firefighting mission because of, as Luz put it, scheduling problems. What MBC did instead was to write CalPERS/Wilshire a clarification, which the Philippine mission hand-carried with it.

Having cleared the investment questions, the only major remaining overhang is what is being referred to in the financial cocktail circuit as the local version of the Asian bird flu epidemic, the Fernando flu virus, which still threatens to engulf the local voting population in May.

But that is another disaster story waiting to unfold.

Heard through the grapevine

THE APRIL 2 concert of Enrique Iglesias in Araneta Coliseum, as well as his other concerts in two Asian cities, has been canceled because of poor ticket sales.

Araneta Coliseum reports that the local concert-goers are instead reserving their budget for the April 30 concert of Andrea Bocelli.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com)

Energy projects to spur Bulacan investments

THE GOVERNMENT'S 10-year power development program and the P82 billion Luzon Island Transmission Augmentation (LISTA) project are expected to boost prospects for investments entry and expansion in the province of Bulacan.

This was expressed yesterday by local government and business leaders of the province who said "a stable and reliable power supply is crucial to the province's bid for accelerated industrial and agricultural growth."

Bulacan officials and businessmen led by Gov. Josefina dela Cruz met with Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. and National Transmission Corp. (Transco) president Alan Ortiz in a dialogue yesterday on the country's power supply situation.

The provincial leaders welcomed assurances from Perez and Ortiz that Luzon "is enjoying a comfortable power reserve of 2,921 megawatts (MW) despite current peak demand of 6,454 MW."

Perez said the Luzon grid currently has a dependable capacity of 9,375 MW, which the government aims to increase by some 565 MW by the end of the year. Target of the 10-year power program is a cumulative additional capacity of 5,380 MW by 2013, Perez said.

Ortiz, meanwhile, announced the launching of the P938.1-million San Jose 500 kilo-volt substation project which will boost the backbone transmission system in the Luzon grid.

Ortiz said the project, which is located in the province, would further ensure the reliable delivery of power throughout the island. It is expected to be completed in 2008.

Ortiz also said the province would benefit from Transco's recently completed P200-million Cluster C substation expansion project to meet the increasing demand of Region 3 customers. Ortiz also launched the P724.281-million Luzon subtransmission projects I and II due for completion in 2007 and which involves the setting up of some 188 circuit-kilometers of 69 kilo-volt lines.

RFM . . .

From page B2

RFM would focus on flour milling and branded food such as ice cream, juices, milk and property development.

Eventually, it will also spin off its property arm Philippine Townships Inc. (Philtown) as a separate company, a plan it has made known last year.

"We've focused on these three main businesses. We spun off Swift to shareholders to balance off the risk. Ten years down the road, hopefully the stock market will come back and people will pay for focused companies," Concepcion said.

Founded in 1958 as the Philippines' first flour milling company, RFM has evolved through the years from a commodity-based and agri-business producer to a huge industrial conglomerate involved in everything from food to property to banking.

Hike in prices of basic goods . . .

From page B1

worker. The P1 increase should translate to an additional P52 to the monthly transport budget of a worker in Metro Manila taking home P7,280 a month.

Workers groups have been demanding a P125 per day increase in wages across the board on the current minimum daily wage of P233 in the National Capital Region and P234 on the average nationwide. The government has not adjusted wages in the last three years.

Based on the rule-of-thumb, every P12 additional daily wage would tend to increase inflation rate by 50 basis points.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas will also review its monetary policy in view of possible pressures from the recent jeepney fare increase.

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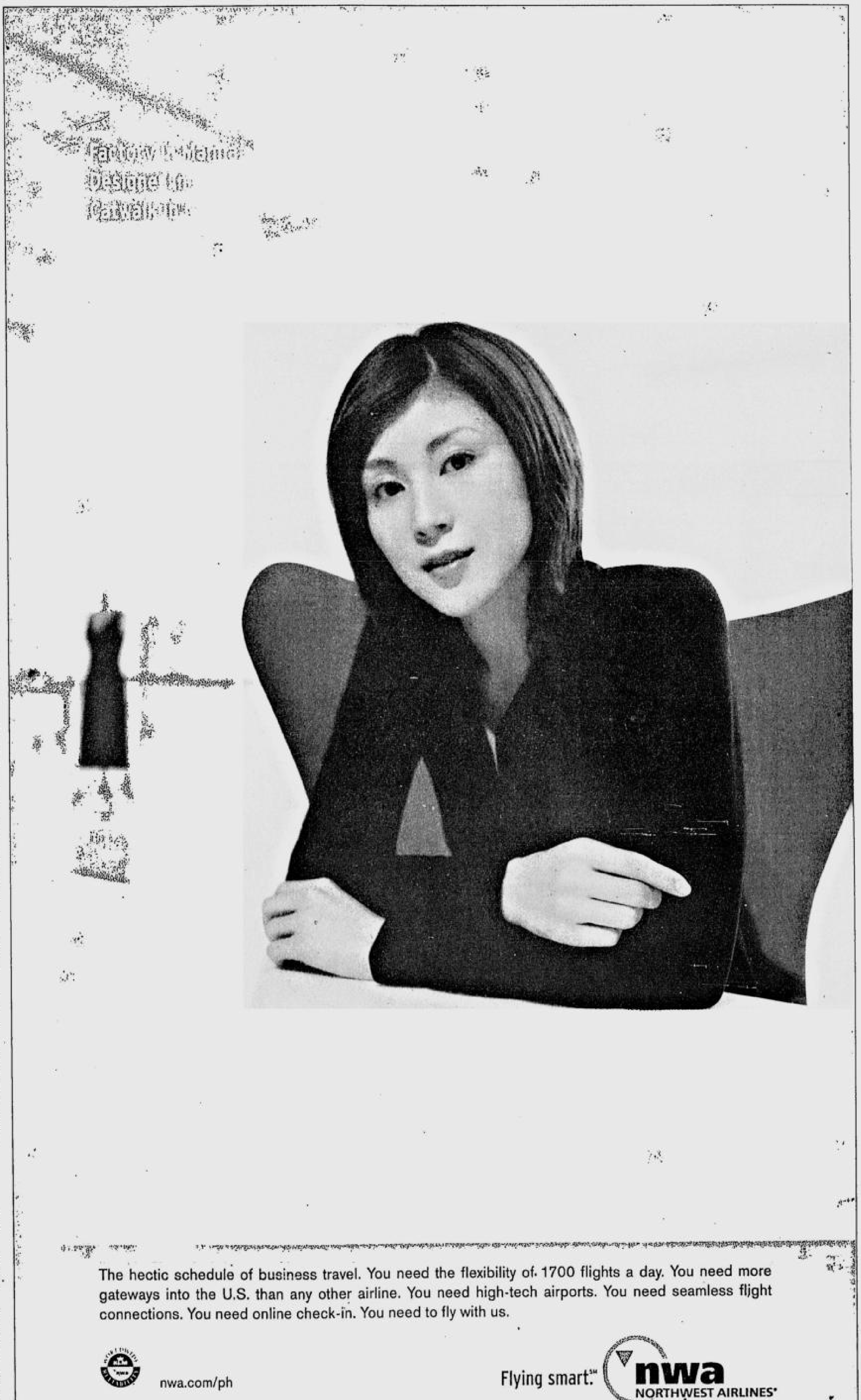

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Gov't to drop currency swap deal with ADB

By Michelle V. Remo

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A high-ranking government official said the government might not push through with the deal if it turns out to be too costly. The source added the government can afford to forego the benefits of the currency swap deal with the ADB.

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The official explained the currency exchange rate that the ADB wants to apply in the deal is either equal to or higher than the prevailing commercial rates, defeating the purpose of the deal being a support for the Philippine government.

The currency swap deal, which the ADB approved recently, involves the exchange of the government's pesos with ADB's dollars. The dollars to be generated by the government from the deal will supposedly be used for lending to private enterprises, especially small and medium businesses.

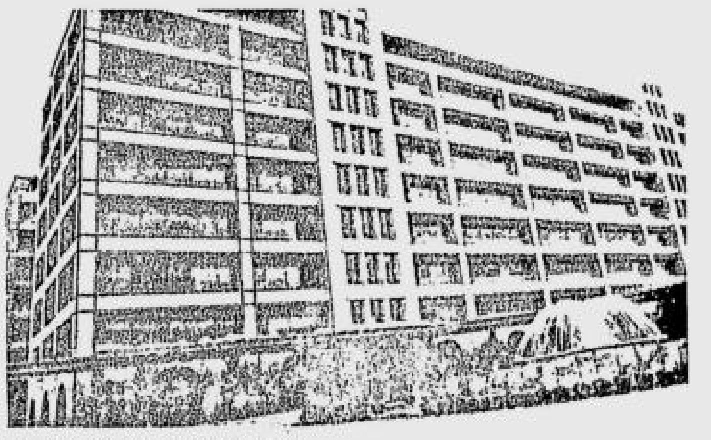
The source said the government proposed that the rate to be used in the deal should be 200 basis points lower than commercial rates.

If approved, the currency swap deal will bring in about $200 million to $500 million to the government.

Another high-ranking government official earlier said the rate the ADB is offering should be lower than the commercial rates, otherwise the government could simply engage in the same deal with commercial banks.

"Why should we make a deal with the ADB if the cost will be the same with what commercial banks are offering?" said the government official on condition of anonymity.

The Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has earlier approved in principle the currency swap deal with the ADB, but sources said the government and the ADB have yet to agree on the terms of the deal.



ADB headquarters in Ortigas

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Stitches continue to run well after 24 years

By Christine A. Gaylican

SUCCESS STORY

WHEN Mauricia "Josie" Go stitched up her ideas in 1980 to put up her first Karimadon Boutique, she somehow knew what Filipinas needed.

"I have always designed and chosen clothes for my boutique that I needed myself. It turns out other people need them too," shares Go.

Now on its 24th year in business, the Japanese-sounding clothes shop is still doing well.

Like the creations of many female international designers Donna Karan, Prada and Vera Wang, Josie Go's designs and choice of clothes for her boutique are a complete expression of herself.

"The clothes that I hang in the stores are what I also could wear. The clothes should be both fashionable and comfortable," shares Josie.

As a manager and designer, Josie says one needs to be both adventurous and thoughtful in this line of business. She observes that since she put up her first boutique in the Virra Mall complex back in 1980, she got the notion that fashion should be perceived not just to put things together creatively but also commercially.

"Aside from keeping a constant watch on what everybody's wearing, I always try to look at things from the customers point of view," she says. "Quality and pricing are prime considerations."

Josie gets the pulse of her customers by frequently visiting the stores and taking note of clients' comments. Daughter Karen now also helps in selecting styles and in choosing the right materials.

"With Karimadon, our clothes are carefully chosen so that they do not go out of style. We make it a point that they are getting their money's worth," Josie notes.

STITCHES/ B7

ALL of the 10 stores in Metro Manila are family owned.

AYALA CORP'S INTEGRATED KALAHI PROGRAM:

Helping a community be self-sufficient

A community transformed. Ayala Executive Managing Director Fernando Zobel de Ayala opens the hydrant signalling the start of the rehabilitation and transformation of the urban poor community of Makaturing in Mandaluyong under Ayala's integrated Kalahi program and the Christian housing ministry, Habitat for Humanity. Photo shows (left), Manila Water president Antonino T. Aquino assisting Mr. Zobel and (right), Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos, Habitat founder Millard Fuller and Mr. Zobel with the community organizers and children of the beneficiaries.

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Ayala Executive Managing Director Fernando Zobel de Ayala had just turned over to Nanay Tilde and to Delia Millona, president of the Makaturing Neighborhood Association, Inc. (MNAI), his company's pledges for a three-year rehabilitation program that would seek to transform the urban poor community in partnership with the Christian housing ministry, Habitat for Humanity.

"You should have seen this community 13 years ago when it was first set up," she explained, her gnarled hands sweeping towards the row of houses which several dozen Habitat "Build Volunteers" were busy sprucing up. "This site was a garbarge dump but the first settlers were all too happy just to have a place to stay. There was muddy drainage water up to our chins during the rainy season, flies and the threat of dengue outbreaks during the hot summer months, no drinking water supply at all, and our houses were just makeshift shanties put together with odd-sized GI sheets and discarded tires."

Ms. Millona, the energetic MNAI president who suceeded Nanay Tilde, was even more emphatic. "Our experience here in Makaturing is proof for all urban poor communities that hoping for a better tomorrow doesn't have to be a pipe dream," she said. "All it takes is hard work, teamwork within the community, and big hearts," she said.

A more liveable community

Located on a former quarry site, Interior 81, Makaturing Street was recently identified as a partner community by the Ayala Corp. because of its need for support and its capability to initiate and continue community development projects.

In 1990, MNAI acquired the land, measuring approximately one hectare, through the government's Community Mortgage Program. With the assistance of the local government and non-government associations, MNAI and the residents were able to transform the area into a more liveable community through a landfill project and proper-blocking.

Three years ago, the Ayala-led water concessionaire, Manila Water Company, initiated a Tubig Para Sa Barangay (TPSB) project in the community, together with Mayor Benhur Abalos, which provided the 216 households here - or some 1,500 residents - access to clean and affordable water supply.

Just recently, Habitat led the construction of 57 new houses and the renovation of 56 existing homes in Makaturing Street as part of a major "Adopt-a-Community Program" together with the Ayala group. Several Ayala subsidiaries are participating in the three-year project which was timed to coincide with the group's 170th anniversary.

Pooling resources

The Ayala group of companies participates in the government's poverty alleviation program, Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan or KALAHI. Beyond providing one-time donations of funds and services, KALAHI allows businesses to come together to pool resources and expertise for greater impact on acommunity such Interior 81 in Makaturing Street..

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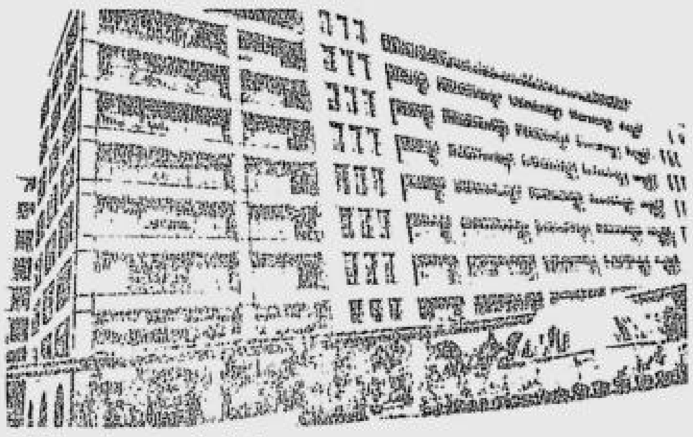
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Stitches continue to run well after 24 years

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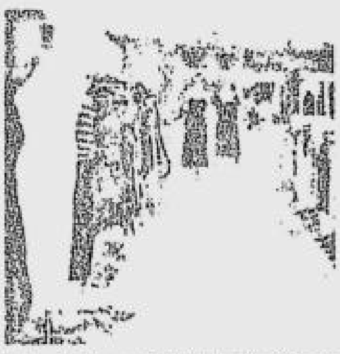
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STITCHES B

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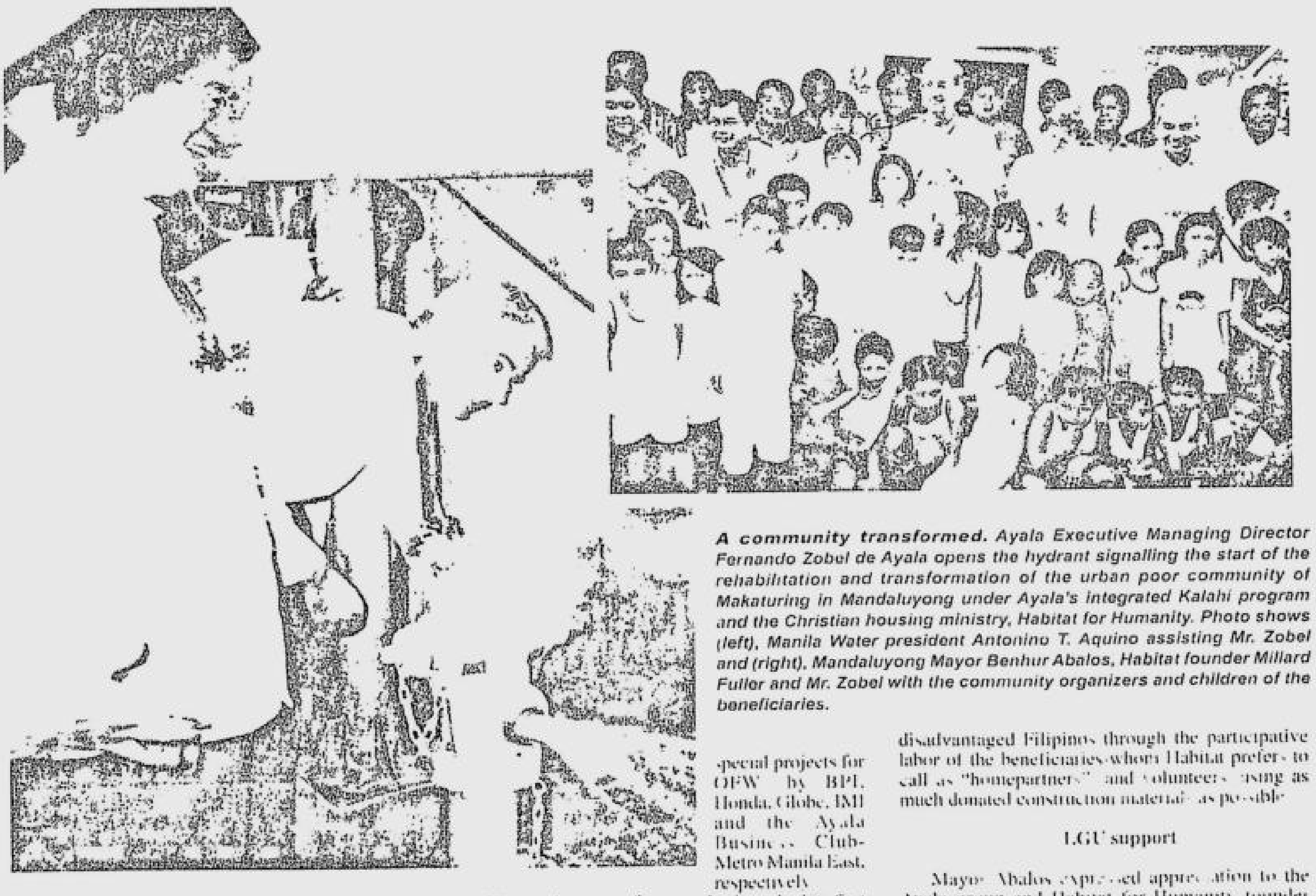
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Puyat heirs ask for bank's closure

THE LEGAL representatives of the Puyat family is asking the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to close the cash-strapped GSIS Family Bank, which they said is causing the state pension fund Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) huge sums of money.

"As a government-owned bank, we feel that there is no legal or practical necessity for the rehabilitation of said bank," said lawyer Eladio Samson, speaking for the Puyats.

He said the GSIS could be violating the law for investing in a bank, especially one that is undergoing rehabilitation, because it is mandated to protect the money placed in it by government employees.

The appeal for the closure of the GSIS Family Bank followed the recent decision of the bank's board to withhold the return of the shares of stock of the late Sen. Gil Puyat Sr. to his heirs. Should the GSIS Family Bank be closed, these may be returned to the Puyat estate, or the companies owned by the Puyat family.

The bank and the Puyats are locked in a battle over the more than 300,000 shares of stock formerly owned by the late senator and his associates. The Puyats, who want the shares returned to the Puyat estate, allege that the GSIS Family Bank's withholding of the shares are illegal. *Michelle V. Remo*

BIR drafts rule to ban sale of TCCs

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue is preparing a regulation that will prohibit the sale of tax credit certificates (TCCs), a move aimed at preventing tax fraud that has resulted in multibillion-peso losses to the government since the 1990s.

"We are preparing a draft revenue regulation that will remove the transferability of TCCs. This will help solve the problem because the system allowing the sale of TCCs is the most common source of corruption," said BIR Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares.

She said the revenue agency is studying whether the proposed revenue regulation would cover only TCCs issued by the BIR or even the TCCs issued by other agencies. Aside from the BIR, the Bureau of Customs and the Department of Finance's One-Stop Shop Duty and Credit Drawback Center are also issuing TCCs.

A TCC is a document that states the amount of tax credits or refund a company, usually an exporter, may avail of. Exporters are granted tax credits as a form of incentive for their dollar contribution to the country.

Originally TCCs were not transferable. The government allowed its sale to allow companies that could not immediately avail of their tax refund because of lack of government funding to benefit from the TCCs by selling them to other companies. The sale of TCCs also does away with the need for companies to queue to the BIR for their tax refund.

TCCs were likewise made to become transferable because exporters that are located in economic zones and thus exempted from the payment of income tax do not have any reason to use the tax credits. To make them enjoy the privilege of the tax credit, they were allowed to sell their TCCs to other companies.

But Henares said the government should revert to the old system of collecting tax credits—that is to queue to the BIR—to plug the loopholes on the present system allowing the sale of TCCs.

"Under the law, tax incentives given to a certain entity should only be enjoyed by the said entity," she said.

Used Rohm Electronics TCCs, worth P24 million, were sold by syndicates to Nissan Motor Corp. and Splash Manufacturing Corp. The TCCs were sold at a discounted price of P21 million. The two companies used the TCCs to settle their tax obligations with the BIR, therefore resulting in P24-million revenue losses for the government.

This recently discovered tax scam was only one of the many other cases of fraud involving the sale of TCCs. The biggest tax scam case was the one involving the Chingkoe group of companies. The group of companies, owned by the couple Faustino and Gloria Chingkoe, accounted for more than half of the P5.3-billion tax credit scam in the 1990s.

Henares said removing the transferability of TCCs would help the government prevent cases of tax fraud from happening again.

Cost of four-year IOUs rise, gov't rejects bids

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COST of the government's four-year borrowing rose by 50 basis points to 11.375 percent during yesterday's auction, with the market still seen trying to factor in the uncertainty in the political front in pricing their bids.

"The bids we considered reflected what we only think as acceptable," said National Treasurer Mina Figueroa in a press briefing after the auction.

The four-year debt paper was oversubscribed with tenders reaching P3.89 billion compared with the P3.5-billion offering made by the government.

Despite a high volume for the four-year T-bond, the price of the bids were considered high, forcing the government to only partially accept the bids. The government only raised P2.87 billion from the auction out of its original borrowing plan of P3.5 billion.

Figueroa said the partial awarding of the bids was a sign the government has the capacity to reject bids if the market would continue pressuring rates to go up.

Meanwhile, Figueroa said the government is looking at issuing 20-year treasury bonds in the second quarter, although details of the proposal, such as the intended amount of borrowing that will be covered by the T-bond, are still on the works.

"If we think of doing anything, it will have to be after the elections," Figueroa said.

She also said the government may consider shifting the government's borrowing mix to further favor more the domestic sources.

"It's possible but nothing is definite yet," she said.

The national treasurer said the government's borrowing mix set for the year is at 70-30 in favor of the domestic. She added, however, that the pre-funding undertaken by the government last year resulted in the government's current borrowing mix of 81-19 in favor of the domestic.

Asked whether the government is considering making issuances of special government securities, such as retail treasury bonds, Figueroa said: "Considering that the market is not very liquid right now, I don't think it is the right time for us to issue RTBs," she said.

Stitches ...

From page B6

Karimadon offers a wide-range of ladies apparel from the classic business suits, casual wear to cocktail gowns with prices ranging from P199 to P3,000. Karimadon Boutiques now also carry plus sizes and shoes to match the clothes.

Beginnings

The behind-the-seams success story of Karimadon Boutique started from Josie's passion to shop for clothes for herself and her family.

The name Karimadon comes from the names of Josie's family members: daughter Karen, husband Richard and son Donnie, that she spliced up.

It was her mother who encouraged her and with P50,000 as capital, she put up her first boutique. Josie says that from then on her hobby turned into a business. After her first Virra Mall outlet, she located in malls that are more accessible and convenient for shoppers.

Because she prefers to be hands-on in the business, all the 10 stores around Metro Manila are family-owned.

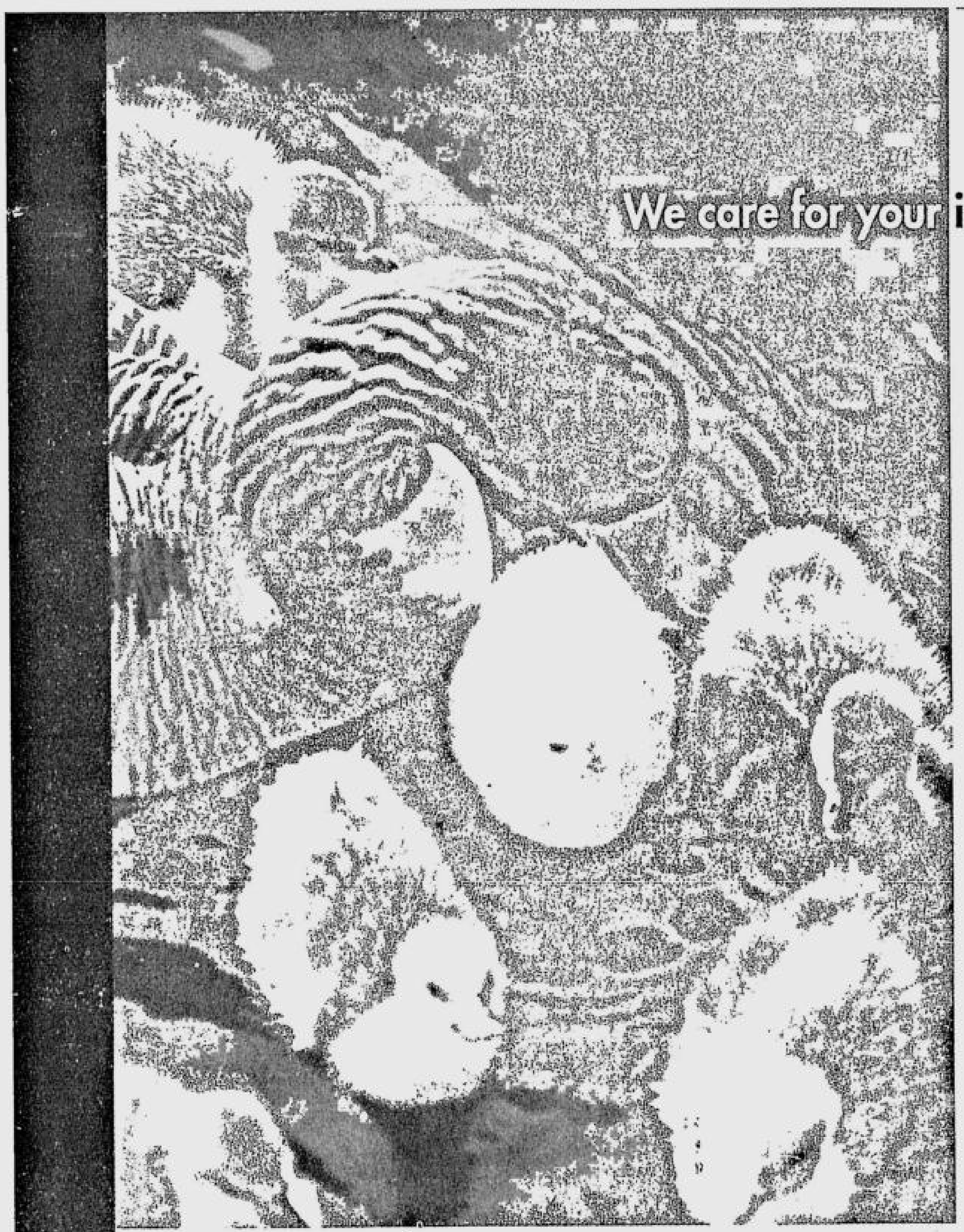
"I personally run the business and I do my rounds every week. It is only last year that I agreed to go into franchising. Our provincial stores in Bacoor, Cavite and Marilao, Bulacan are franchised," says Josie.

Marketing

For the last 20 years, Josie did not invest much into advertising for Karimadon because she believes that with good quality and price, customers would come back.

In the mid-'80s, show biz outfits and fashion magazines asked Karimadon to dress up both personalities and ramp models.

Now with the telenovela and gag shows genre, Karimadon is still there to provide clothes for the stars including Dina Bonnevie, Eula Valdez, Lani Misalucha, Lorna Tolentino, Iza Calzado, Bea Alonzo, Angelica dela Cruz and Nancy Castiliogne.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[1] In terms of volume growth from 2001 to 2003
[2] Market share growth from 1999 to 2003
[3] Watson Wyatt survey for the past 3-year period (2000 to 2002) and the past 5-year period (1998 to 2003)
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High corn prices force feed millers to look elsewhere

SINGAPORE—Asian feed millers are snapping up every available cargo that can be used as an alternative ingredient to corn, whose global prices have hit 6-year highs.

Malaysia is buying cassava from Vietnam. Vietnam is bringing in palm kernel from Malaysia. And some rice producing nations are boosting the use of broken rice in feed. But all these ingredients can only be partial substitutes for corn.

The Asian feed market has been scrambling for alternatives as export offers of Chinese corn dwindled due to a drop in stocks. US corn is available but prices have climbed. Analysts see the trend continuing as China tries to cap domestic grain prices.

"Buyers are desperate to find anything that can substitute corn—anything cheaper will fly," said a Singapore-based trader. "Corn prices are not just rising, they are touching the sky." *Reuters*

Stocks edge up in Asian markets

SINGAPORE—The dollar hovered near a 3-1/2-year low against the yen on Tuesday and Asian stocks edged up, buoyed by a Wall Street rise as investors recovered from security fears and looked with optimism to quarterly earnings.

The dollar was around 105.48 yen, flat from late US levels and not far from its 3-year low of 105.16 yen hit last month.

Most stock indices in Asia rose, but gains in Tokyo were pared as investors took profits on recent high-flyers and amid caution the dollar could fall below 105 yen if Japanese corporate sentiment data on Thursday is better than expected.

Japan's Nikkei average had risen 0.3 percent by midday to 11,749.19, lifting the index up more than 10 percent so far this year.

"If the dollar decisively breaks below 105 yen, that would stoke earnings fears and keep investors from buying high-tech issues," said Tetsuya Ishijima, senior investment strategist at Okasan Securities.

An MSCI index of Asia Pacific shares outside Japan was up 0.5 percent at 0240 GMT.

Wariness about Bank of Japan intervention is far from disappearing despite speculation Tokyo may scale back its aggressive intervention policy, keeping the yen in check for now.

"They may not try to boost the dollar, but there will still be intervention," said Etsuko Yamashita, chief economist at Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp.

The euro, undermined recently by speculation that the European Central Bank may cut rates to shore up the euro-zone economy, rose as some traders bought back the currency ahead of an ECB policy meeting on Thursday.

It was quoted at $1.2173, up from around $1.2155 in late US trade.

US stocks rose on Monday after volatile trading in the past three weeks, dominated by global security fears after the deadly bombings in Madrid and Israel's killing of Hamas' spiritual leader.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 1.1 percent to 10,329 and the technology-heavy Nasdaq Composite Index climbed 1.7 percent to 1,992. They both ended at their highest levels in more than two weeks.

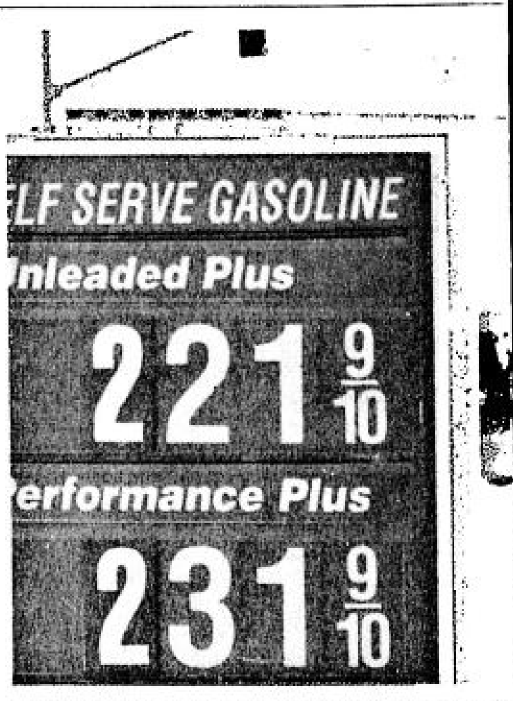
The focus this week is on the ECB meeting to see if it cuts interest rates from 2 percent, and US jobs data due on Friday.

Shares in Hong Kong rose 0.7 percent, lifted by a 2.3-percent rise in conglomerate Hutchison Whampoa Ltd.

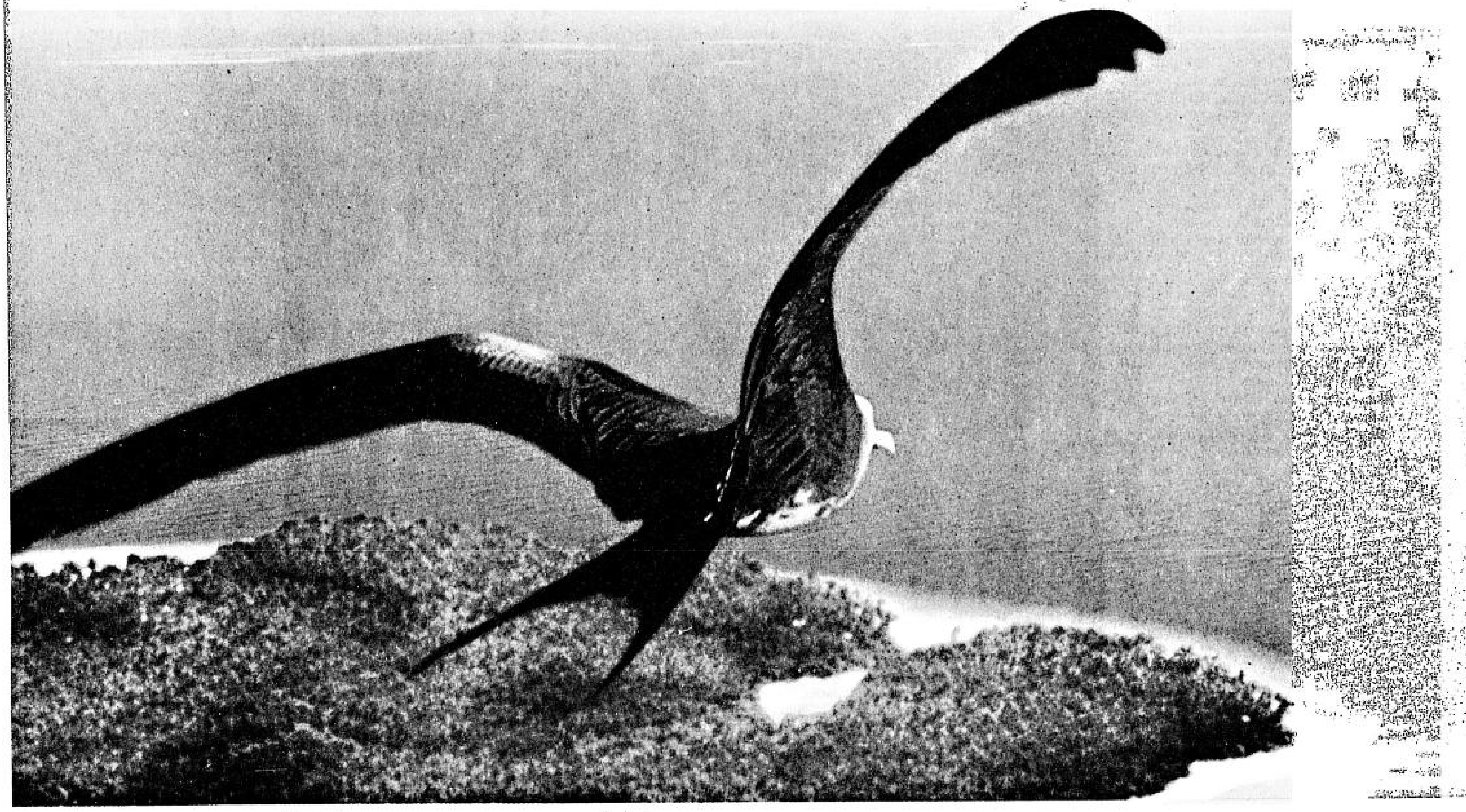
In Japan, exporters such as Toyota Motor Co., Honda Motor and Sony Corp. all rose more than one percent despite the yen's strength.

Taiwan shares were flat, held in check by investors taking profits after a strong rebound in the previous session.

Japanese industrial output fell 3.7 percent in February, slightly more than forecasts for a 3.4-percent drop. February's jobless rate was unchanged at five percent, marginally higher than forecasts for a 4.9-percent rate. *Reuters*



A CAR passes a gasoline station on a highway in Palm
pump shot to record levels, surveys showed, and ana



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Yupangco sale

YUPANGCO Electronics Corp (YEC) is currently offering a great sale on its audio-video (AV) and professional audio (PA) equipments. Patrons can take advantage of special giveaway premiums, extended warranties up to two years and up to 50 percent mark down prices on world-renowned brands like Apogee, Celestion, Sennheiser Evolution Microphones, Soundtech, Tannoy and Yamaha. Also available at affordable prices are packages on Chapel, Brackground Music, Sound Contractor, Boutique, Touring, Broadcast, Electon, Mobile DJ, Reinforcement, Acoustic system for professional audio equipment, as well as a variety of packages for Home Theater System. Furthermore, YEC is offering Easycredit Installment Schemes at up to 24 months. Details can be obtained at any Yamaha Music Stores, Perfect Pitch Store, Music Spot Outlet and select dealers nationwide or at 899-9735, 899-8758.

Mega women's golf

ONCE again, Mega Magazine will be having its annual Mega Women's Golf Tournament. The golfing event of the year celebrates the women's prowess on the green, in the spirit of camaraderie and sportsmanship. The "sporting-cum-fashion" event gathers the country's society players, celebrity golfers and members of various golf associations all in one Mega day. A shotgun start, wherein tee-off will be done simultaneously, opens the golf tournament. To culminate the event, a fashion show participated in by the players will be held during the awarding ceremonies. Play with stars like Akiko Thompson at the Tagaytay Midlands on March 31. "Game Plan" will cover the much-awaited event with Tricia Chiongbian as the celebrity host. For more information, call 631-2859.

15th Lancer Jr netfest

MITSUBISHI Motors Philippines Corp and Accel Sports will once again prove its commitment to the development of the youth and sports through the staging of the 15th Mitsubishi Lancer International Junior Tennis Championship. The tournament is ongoing until April 4 at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex. Admission is free. The tennis tourney was elevated to Group 1 by the International Tennis Federation last year, making this tournament more competitive and exciting. The event is made possible by the Philippine Tennis Association, Philippine Sports Commission, Department of Tourism, Traders Hotel, Wilson Balls and Summit Natural Drinking Water.

Credit, collection seminar

THE FINANCIAL Executives Institute of the Philippines (Finex), the country's premier finance professional organization, is sponsoring a seminar on Developing No-Nonsense Credit and Collection Discipline-Power. This seminar will discuss and impart the best practices in the use and enforcement of credit. Generally, delinquent, distressed and bad accounts receivable conditions ensue from the absence and lack of no-nonsense credit and collection policies and procedures. The resource speaker is Erdulfo S. Sison, president of Business Assistance Credit Corp (Bagco Credit), one of the pioneers in the credit and collection industry in the last 40 years. This whole day program will be held on March 31, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati City. For details, call 811-4052, 811-4187 or e-mail avviloria@finex.org.ph.

Dionatext book launch

THE FIRST prize and consolation prize winners of the Dionatext Text-a-Poem contest will be awarded and honored at the Dionatext Araw ng Parangal at 2 p.m. on March 31 at the Pulungang Claro M. Recto of the Faculty Center of UP Diliman. The compilation of the winning entries will also be launched during the occasion. Dionatext is sponsored by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) in cooperation with FIT, Unyon ng mga Manunulat sa Pilipinas (Umpil) and ICW. The contest was held to popularize and revitalize the tradition of one of the oldest forms of poetry by using modern technology. For more information, call Badong at 922-1830.

HS Journalism award

A HIGH school journalism award, in honor of the late press freedom crusader Vicente L. Del Fierro, one of the most colorful figures in Philippine journalism in the early post-war period, will be given to outstanding high school journalists of Torres High School in Gagalangin, Tondo on March 31. Dubbed as the Vicente L. Del Fierro Memorial High School Journalism Award, Vic del Fierro & Associates in collaboration with PLDT will give recognition to deserving students who achieve excellent recognition in both city-wide and regional journalism competitions among government high schools. Among the corporate supporters are National Bookstore, Nokia Philippines and Wendy's Hamburgers.

NREA business meet

COMMISSIONER Guillermo L. Parayno Jr of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) has been invited to address the business meeting of the National Real Estate Association (NREA) on March 31 starting 6:30 p.m. at the Gabaldon Hall of Club Filipino, Greenhills, San Juan. Architect Nestor S. Mangio, NREA national president, said Parayno will speak on the recent tax incentives to real estate practitioners and on BIR regulations affecting realty transactions. The business meeting, led by NREA trustee and spokesperson Marissa del Mar and secretary general Marciano Ilagan, will also serve as NREA's celebration for the induction of its new officers. Interested parties are invited. Call 913-4463 or 912-3492.

US gas prices hit record levels

Springs, California. US gasoline prices at the
ysts predicted that prices may go even higher. AFP

NEW YORK—Strong demand and environmental regulations have pumped US average retail gasoline prices to record levels and they could go even higher, according to an industry analyst.

The national average for self-serve regular unleaded gas rose 3.34 cents to $1.7716 a gallon in the two weeks that ended March 26, according to the nationwide Lundberg survey of 8,000 gas stations.

Adjusted for inflation, gasoline is not at its peak. In today's dollars, the price of gasoline in 1981 was about a nickel short of $3 per gallon.

The Lundberg survey said gasoline has risen 29 cents per gallon since Dec. 19. But the current price is just four cents above what it was one year ago, according to the survey released on Sunday.

The AAA, a motorist and travel group, on Friday said prices hit a record for the fourth day in a row.

The least likely outcome in the short term is a significant drop in gas prices, as demand is on the rise, said survey editor Trilby Lundberg.

She said economic growth was fueling world crude oil and US gasoline demand.

"Gasoline market conditions are very similar to what they were last March, with high crude oil prices and tight US gasoline supplies," Lundberg said.

"But this year refiners' work to prepare for maximizing output during spring and summer—when we need the most gasoline—must be even more extensive and costly due to new environmental protection regulations that hit the sector Jan. 1," she added.

The meeting of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries on Wednesday in Vienna to review the world oil market will be closely watched by traders, Lundberg said.

The cartel agreed in February to cut 1 million barrels per day from its official output ceiling starting April 1. *Reuters*

Saudi minister: There's plenty of oil in the market

VIENNA—Oil markets are well supplied, Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi told reporters on his arrival for Wednesday's Opec meeting, when cartel ministers will review policy in the light of steep crude prices.

"There is plenty of oil out there," Naimi said.

Asked if Opec was still focused on a $25 a barrel price for its oil, the minister said: "Yes ... that is what we have said many, many times."

Naimi said Opec had already implemented April 1 reductions of one million barrels per day.

"It's already been implemented, nominations already came out in March," he said.

Buyers have said only around a third of the cut decided at Opec's Feb. 10 meeting had been brought into effect.

Naimi said he could not predict the outcome of the cartel's Wednesday meeting and first needed to study data on market fundamentals.

"We are going to see the outlook," he said. "I have to see what the data is."

The minister was asked about the role of the speculative investment funds in driving oil's rally to 13-year highs for US crude.

"Do you think we determine the price?" he replied. "Speculators will do what speculators need to do to make money." *Reuters*

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A FUN-TASTIC DAY AT STORYLAND

Over 100 children from the Ang Mumunting Anghel ng Parañaque recently had a fun-tastic day of fun and treats at Storyland, the country's most exciting theme park. Storyland's well-loved characters Ellie the Elephant, Lionel the Lion King, Sgt. March and Eggbert welcomed the kids to the park and led them along the park's themed attractions. Fun-tasy was real for the kids who couldn't contain their squeals of excitement and laughter as they rode the Silver Streak Roller Coaster, Atom Smasher Bumper Cars, Krazy Kars, and the Barn Stormer Airplanes. The kids especially had a lovely time trying out the Bumble Bee Bop and the Fun Paddler. They were later treated to merienda and ice cream and then to games, contests and surprises. But the fun didn't stop there. The kids went home with a bag of goodies, fun-tastic memories, and lots of hugs from Storyland's Ellie and Lionel. Ang Mumunting Anghel ng Parañaque is one of the many which Storyland tries to reach out and give fun to less fortunate children. Storyland is located at the ground level of SM Southmall in Las Piñas and the third level of SM City Fairview

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PUBLIC NOTICES

AUCTION SALE

MARA PAWNSHOP BR of 2230 M. Roxas St. Sta Ana Manila Auction Sale on APRIL 7, 2004 Wed.at 2:30 in the afternoon. Respectively, Nov. 1 - Dec. 7, 2003.
- SONS of J. LANUZA, Auctioneer.
(PDI-March 31, 2004)

MARA PAWNSHOP I, II, III, IV and Comembo Br. of Makati City. AUCTION SALE on April 7, 2004 Wed. at 10:30, 11:30, 12:30, 1:30 and 8:30 in the morning and on the afternoon, respectively, Nov. 10 - Dec. 7, 2003. - SONS OF J. LANUZA, Auctioneer.
(PDI-March 31, 2004)

MI MARA Pawnshop of 251 Quirino Ave. Baclaran P'que M. M AUCTION SALE on April 7, 2004 Tues. at 4:00 in the afternoon Respectively.
Nov. 10, 2003 - Dec. 7, 2003.
- Sons of J. Lanuza, Auctioneer
(PDI- March 31, 2004)

LEGAL NOTICE

An Extrajudicial Settlement of the Estate of Jose B. Caindig was executed & acknowledged by his children/heirs on 11 Sept 2003 before Pasig City Notary Public Maria Lourdes C. San Pablo (Doc 46, Page 10, Bk I, S 2003), after execution & acknowledgement by Consuelo A. Caindig, widow of Jose B. Caindig & mother of said heirs, of a Repudiation of Inheritance on 10 Sept 2003 before the aforementioned notary public (Doc 45, Page 10, Bk I, S. 2003). (PDI-3/24, 31, 4/7, 2004)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late spouses Vicente S. Filart and Pacita G. Filart was extrajudicially settled by their heirs per Doc. No. 102; Page No. 22; Book No. 663; Series of 2001 before Notary Public Jose S. Padolina of Quezon City.
(PDI-Mar 24, 31&April 7,2004)

Notice is hereby given that the Estate of the late JOSE HERRERA TANCIONGCO has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc. No. 16, Page No. 4, Book No. X, Series of 2003 before Notary Public Atty. Jorescel S. Panganiban of Balanga City.
(PDI-March 17,24&31, 2004)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice of Loss - S2 Card# 16637N99 issued on 4/16/99 to Dr. Elenita Diga (PDI-3/31/04)

Republic of the Philippines
CITY COUNCIL
Manila

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CONSTRUCTION, ESTABLISHMENT, MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OF AN ANIMAL CLINIC AND PET CEMETERY IN THE CITY OF MANILA,PROVIDING FUNDS NECESSARY THEREFOR.

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, the present generation of pet owners of our City have embraced pet animals as part of their families;

WHEREAS, thus, the City Government of Manila has found it necessary to provide its residents with an animal clinic and a proper burial place for their beloved pets in an appropriate place within the City limits;

WHEREAS, the animal clinic will provide veterinary services for their animal pets, while the animal cemetery will serve as a final resting place for pets such as dogs and cats and other domesticated animals: NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it ordained by the City Council of Manila, THAT

SECTION 1. The construction, establishment, maintenance and operation of an animal clinic and pet cemetery in the City of Manila are hereby authorized.

SEC. 2. The City of Manila shall provide an area of FIVE THOUSAND SQUARE METERS (5,000 Sq. M.) located at the North Cemetery where the animal clinic and pet cemetery can be established.

SEC. 3. The amount that shall be so much thereof, as may be necessary, shall be appropriated, out of any unappropriated funds existing in the City Treasury to be made available for the implementation of this Ordinance.

SEC. 4. *Effectivity Clause* – This Ordinance shall take effect upon its approval.

Enacted by the City Council of Manila at its regular session today,

Approved by His Honor, the City Mayor, on

APPROVED:

JOSE L. ATIENZA, JR.
Mayor
City of Manila

DANILO B. LACUNA
Vice-Mayor and Presiding Officer
City Council, Manila

ATTESTED

EMMANUEL R. SISON
Secretary to the Mayor

RODOLFO F. LAPID
Secretary to the City Council

PRINCIPAL AUTHORS: HON. CITA ASTALS, Hon. Benjamin D. Asilo, Hon. Don Ramon A. Bagatsing, Hon. Carlos C. Castañeda, Hon. Juan Miguel T. Cuna, Hon. Ma. Theresa B. Bonoan-David, Hon. Ma. Asuncion G. Fugoso, Hon. Richard C. Ibay, Hon. Ricardo S. Isip, Hon. Arlene W. Koa, Hon. Pacifico D. Laxa, Hon. Julio E. Logarta, Jr., Hon Jhosep Y. Lopez, Hon. Edward V.P. Maceda, Hon. Victoriano A. Melendez, Hon. Patrick S. Ocampo, Hon. Roberto R. Ortega, Jr., Hon. Eduardo P. Quintos XIV, Hon. Miles M. Roces, Hon. Edward M. Tan, Hon. Amalia A. Tolentino, Hon. Danilo T. Varona and HON. MARLON M. LACSON, Majority Floor Leader.

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the City Council ordered the publication of the above proposed Ordinance during its regular session held on March 11, 2004, pursuant to the provisions of Section 17, Article III of R.A. 409, as amended, otherwise known as the Revised Charter of the City of Manila.

RODOLFO F. LAPID
City Government Dept. Head III
(Secretary to the City Council)

(PDI – March 31, 2004)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the public that
RODIEL S. BALOY
is no longer connected with Philippine Airlines, Inc.
Any transaction entered into by him will no longer be honored by the Philippine Airlines, Inc.

(PDI – March 31, 2004)

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In Loving Memory

First Death Anniversary

ATTY. EDWIN PASCUA ACOBA

(January 7, 1944 – April 1, 2003)

Holy Masses for his eternal peace will be offered
at the following churches:

1. **Our Lady of Perpetual Help**, Project 8, Quezon City .. 6 a.m. & 5 p.m.
2. **La Loma Catholic Cemetery** .... 9 a.m.
3. **St. Michael Parish Church**, Iligan City .... 6 a.m.
4. **St. John Evangelist Church**, Guimba, Nueva Ecija .... 6 a.m.
5. **San Miguel Church**, Manila .... 6 p.m.
6. **Santissimo Rosario Church**, UST, España, Manila .... 7 a.m.
7. **Philippine Senate**, Pasay City .... 12 noon
8. **Agricultural Training Institute Chapel**, Dept. of Agriculture .. 10 a.m.
9. **Basilica Sto. Niño**, Cebu City

His loving wife **Marie Lou**; children **Mitet**, **Raymond** and **Ilai**; sister **Dra. Resora P. Acoba**, and other relatives request all those whose lives he has touched to remember him in prayers.

FR. BIENVENIDO "Ben" M. PRADO, SVD

(Lingayen, Pangasinan)
Our Filipino Missionary to Indonesia

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on March 27, 2004 at the age of 77.

Fr. Ben Prado was a member of the Society of the Divine Word. He was ordained a priest on December 21, 1957 at Kamuning, Quezon City. He was a missionary for 44 years in Indonesia.

Our Congregation, his relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His interment was held last Monday, March 29, 2004 in Surabaya, Indonesia.

There is a time and a season for everything.
A time to be born and a time to die...
A time to weep and a time to mourn.
A time to laugh and a time to dance.
God made everything beautiful in its time.
Ecclesiastes 3:1,2,4 and 11

Manny T.Y. Ang

(Ang Tiao Yong)

Peacefully joined his Creator
on March 28, 2004 at the age of 59.

His cremains lie in state beginning March 29, 2004 at the Capilla del Señor and Capilla dela Virgen, Santuario de San Antonio, Mc Kinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Manny's ashes will be interred in the Columbarium of Santuario de San Antonio after the celebration of a Farewell Mass at the main church one o'clock in the afternoon of April 2, 2004.

His bereaved family, relatives and friends who will miss Manny's zest for life be it of triumph, trial or tribulation, fidelity to kith and kin, and an uncommon dedication to his craft, request all pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City;
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San Miguel Ave., Pasig City
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243 A.B. Fernandez Ave.,
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Tels. (0785) 522-3451; 522-2128; (0917) 434-9976

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Tels. 231-0721; 231-3192

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Camus Ext. cor. J. Abad Santos, Davao City;
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Tels. (049) 562-1668; 800-2914 Cel. No. (0917) 5010983

In Loving Memory...

First Death Anniversary

GLENN C. BANGUIS

(Dec. 4, 1950 - March 31, 2003)

"For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain."
- Philippians 1:21

Holy Masses for his eternal peace will be offered
today at the following churches:

St. Joseph the Worker Parish Enrique St. Palanan, Makati City	6:00 AM 7:00 AM 6:00 PM
St. John Bosco Parish Pasay Road, Makati City	6:30 AM 7:30 AM 12:15 PM 6:00 PM
National Shrine of the Sacred Heart Sacred Heart St., San Antonio Village, Makati City	6:00 AM 6:30 AM 7:00 AM 12:15 PM 6:00 PM
Sto. Niño De Paz Chapel Greenbelt, Makati City	7:15 AM 12:15 PM 5:45 PM 7:00 PM

His wife **NELLY**, children **JOSEPH**, **GRACE ANNE**, **MARY BETH**, **MARY ROSE** and **GLENELLI**; parents **TOM** and **PELANG**; brother **TOM**, sister **GRACE**, brothers and sisters-in-law, nephews and nieces request relatives and friends and all those whose lives he has touched, to remember him in prayers.

"BUT BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO TRUSTS IN THE LORD, WHOSE CONFIDENCE IS IN HIM."
- Jeremiah 17:7

**"For God so loved
the world,
that He gave
His only
begotten Son,
that whoever believes
in Him
shall not perish
but have
everlasting life."**
John 3:16

DEATH NOTICES

JOSE V. BELLEZA
of Goa, Camarines Sur
Peacefully joined our Creator on March 25, 2004, at the age 60.
His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.
He will be cremated today at 4 p.m.

ROSARIO VALDES GUERRERO
Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on March 28, 2004 at the age of 78.
Her body lies in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, 12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.
Cremation will be on April 2, 2004 at the Funeraria Paz at 10:00 a.m. after the 8:30 a.m. Mass at Arlington Memorial Chapels.

PNOC
The Energy Company

PNOC EXPLORATION CORPORATION
Bldg. 1, Energy Center, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines
Tel. 840-1625 or 893-6001 Loc. 1120
Fax No. (632) 840-1619
E-mail addresses: rbasallo@pnoc-ec.com.ph or purch@pnoc-ec.com.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY

PNOC Exploration Corporation (PNOC EC) invites interested suppliers of the following product commodities to apply for eligibility and be part of the company's pool of accredited suppliers:

- Air-conditioning System
- Authorized Honda Dealers
- Authorized Isuzu Dealers
- Authorized Mitsubishi Dealers
- Authorized Toyota Dealers
- Books / Reference Materials
- Computer Hardware & Infrastructure
- Computer Software
- Construction Materials and Supplies
- Industrial / Oil Filters
- Industrial Pumps
- Laboratory Equipment
- Machinery Parts
- Mining Equipment & Supplies
- Office Equipment & Appliances
- Office Furniture
- Office Uniforms
- Office Printed Forms
- Safety Gadgets / Gears
- Service Awards & Trophies

Pre-qualification documents are available for issuance starting **April 1 to 30, 2004 from 3:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.** at the **Purchasing Section of PNOC Exploration Corporation Bldg. 1, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **PESOS: Two Hundred (PhP 200.00).**

For further inquiries, you may contact **Mr. Wilfredo C. Zamora (Purchasing Officer) / Ms. Emeline C. Paule (Purchasing Assistant) at tel. nos. (632) 893-1320 loc. 1120 / (632) 840-1625 or e-mail at purch@pnoc-ec.com.ph.**

PNOC EC reserves the right to reject any or all accreditation documents or parts thereof, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such documents when it is considered most advantageous to PNOC EC.

This publication is also posted in our website at www.pnoc-ec.com.ph and in the DBM website at www.procurementservices.net

(Sgd.) ERNESTO S. SAN JOSE
Bids and Awards Committee
Chairman

(PDI – March 31, 2004)

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES SYSTEM
Diliman, Quezon City
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

A. The University of the Philippines Diliman hereby invites all interested parties to apply for eligibility to bid for:

Lease of the V.I.P. Lounge of Vinzon's Hall with an approximate area of 31.96 sq.m. which is suitable for a beauty salon and/or dress shop.

B. The following eligibility requirements in two copies, duly certified must be submitted to the Supply and Property Management Office (SPMO) at Instructional Materials Corp. Building (National Book Development Board), A. Regidor Street fronting the PAG-ASA Astronomical Observatory, U.P. Campus, Diliman, Quezon City, to form the basis for evaluation and assessment for pre-qualification of bidders:

1. SEC/DTI/Cooperative Development Registration Papers
2. 2003 Business License/Permit
3. Income Tax Return for the last two (2) years (2002 & 2003) with accompanying Audited Financial Statements marked "received" by the BIR
4. Company Profile
5. List of clients (pass and present) with corresponding contract costs, references and supporting documents
6. List of company equipment and other assets
7. Statement of the company that it is not "blacklisted" or barred from bidding by any government agency, offices or corporations

DETAILED SPECIFICATIONS WILL BE LISTED IN THE BIDDING DOCUMENTS

The above mentioned requirements must be completely submitted in two (2) separate folders with **Table of Contents** and **properly tabbed**. Otherwise, the same will not be accepted by the SPMO.

NOTE: "ONLY ELIGIBLE BIDDERS WILL BE ISSUED THE INVITATION TO BID DOCUMENTS AND BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BIDDING.

C. Deadline for submission: **April 16, 2004**

D. Pre-bidding and bidding schedules shall be announced to all eligible bidders.

E. The University of the Philippines reserves the right to review the qualifications of all selected bidders, subject to technical, financial and production criteria, reject any or all bids, waive any formality or defect therein and accept the offer considered most advantageous to the University.

F. For further particulars, please inquire from Mr. Pedro E. Fajardo, Chief, SPMO, anytime during office hours at the above mentioned address or call Tel. No. 920-53-74 (direct line) and 920-53-01 local 4331, 4911 and 4913, or contact the Business Concessions Office (BCO) at Tel. No. 925-69-96 and 920-53-01 local 7926.

(Sgd.) **EMERLINDA R. ROMAN**
Chancellor

(PDI--March 24 & 31, 2004)

ISABELA-1 ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Victoria, Alicia, Isabela
Tel. No. (078) 662-7103, 662-7983, 662-7810
Fax No. (078) - 6627103
-6627917

INVITATION TO SUBMIT BID PROPOSAL

Isabela-1 Electric Cooperative, Inc., wishes to invite interested supplier to submit bid proposal for a commodity loan as follows:

a. Supply, installation and commissioning of 10 MVA substation including metering and protection equipments but excluding site development.
b. Supply, construction and commissioning of 24 kilometers 69 KV lines along the national road between Santiago City and Cabatuan, Isabela.

Interested parties may secure bid proposal documents for a commodity loan at the Management Internal Auditing Department. Furthermore, please consider the following to supplement your best proposal:

a) Type of loan – Commodity loan
b) Terms of payment:
   Down payment – 10% of offered price
   Balance is payable within 5 years
c) First amortization starts upon commissioning

The schedule of activities are as follows:

PARTICULARS	DATE/TIME
A) 1. Submission of qualification requirements	– April 5, 2004
2. Issuance of notice to all qualified and disqualified suppliers	– April 6, 2004
B) Issuance of Documents to qualified suppliers for the commodity loan and payment of filing fee	– April 6-12, 2004
C) Submission of bid proposals	– April 19, 2004
D) Evaluation of submitted bid proposals	– April 20, 2004
E) Awarding to supplier with best proposal	– April 21, 2004

The Checklist of qualification requirements are the following:

1. Non-refundable filing fee in the amount of THREE THOUSAND PESOS ONLY (P3,000.00) in the form of cash.
2. Supplier with National Electrification Administration accreditation.
3. Complete set of legal documents of the company, i.e., SEC registration, Articles of Inc. and By-laws, and Company Profile Business registration and license papers.
4. Audited Financial Statements (Balance Sheet and Income Statement) duly filed/stamped received by BIR.
5. If represented by an agent of the firm, he/she must have a letter from the President/Manager/Owner that he/she is the authorized representative.

The ISELCO-1 reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any defect thereon and make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the coop (ISELCO-1). The ISELCO-1 likewise assumes no obligation for whatever losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that the award shall be made.

(Sgd.) **ENGR. VIRGILIO L. MONTANO**
TSD Manager/Management Team Leader

(PDI–March 31, April 1 & 2, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Supreme Court invites prospective bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the provision of Janitorial Services for the Supreme Court.

The approved estimated budget for the contract is Four Million Four Hundred Pesos (P4,400,000.00) chargeable against the Judiciary Development Fund.

Interested bidders for Janitorial Services may obtain the necessary eligibility requirements from the Secretariat, Committee on Bids, Property Division, Supreme Court, after payment of a non-refundable fee of Eight Hundred Pesos (P800.00). For additional information contact the Secretary, Atty. Ennar Cabanilla at Telefax 4042731 or Norma C. Josue at Telefax 5247425.

I. PRE-BID CONFERENCE

The pre-bid conference shall be on **April 16, 2004 at 2:00 p.m.** at the **3rd Floor Session Hall, Old Supreme Court Building.**

II. SUBMISSION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

All legal requirements for eligibility of prospective bidders must be personally submitted by the duly authorized representative on **April 21, 2004 at 2:00 p.m.** at the **3rd Floor, Session Hall, Old Supreme Court Building.**

III. OPENING OF BIDS

Only bids of eligible bidders will be accepted and opened in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives on **April 28, 2004 at 2:00 p.m.** at the **3rd Floor Old Session Hall Supreme Court Building.**

Interested bidders must not be related to the need of the procuring entity or any member of the Committee on Bids or COB Secretariat either by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree.

The Committee on Bids reserves the right to reject any or all bids waive any defects or informalities therein, or accept any bids/s or offer/s which it may consider to be advantageous and beneficial to the government.

(Sgd.) JOSE P. PEREZ
Chairman
Committee on Bids

(PDI – March 24 & 31, 2004)

PNOC
The Energy Company

PNOC EXPLORATION CORPORATION
Bldg. 1, Energy Center, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines
Tel. 840-1625 or 893-6001 Loc. 1120
Fax No. (632) 840-1619
E-mail addresses: rbasallo@pnoc-ec.com.ph, infotech@pnoc-ec.com.ph or purch@pnoc-ec-com.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC Exploration Corporation (PNOC EC) invites interested suppliers to apply for eligibility and if, subsequently found eligible, to submit sealed bids for the supply, and delivery of:

ONE (1) UNIT NETWORK FIREWALL
PR NO. IT 245 208

Bid documents shall be available for issuance starting **March 31, 2004** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **PESOS: Eight Hundred (PhP 800.00).**

For purposes of clarification, a pre-bidding conference will be conducted on **April 15, 2004, 2:00 p.m., Manila time, at Bldg. I Conference Room** of the above stated address.

Deadline for the submission of all Eligibility Requirements will be on **April 22, 2004, Wednesday, up to 4:00 P.M. at PNOC EC Purchasing Section, Building 1** of the above address. Only suppliers who are prequalified will be allowed to submit their bids.

All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the amount stipulated in the tender documents in the form acceptable to PNOC EC. Sealed technical and financial bids in two (2) sets shall be received by the PNOC EC Purchasing not later than **April 29, 2004, 2:00 p.m., Manila time**, at the above stated address. Late bids shall not be accepted. Public opening of the technical and financial bids shall follow thereafter. Only the bids of the technically complying bidders shall be opened.

The approved budget for the project, which shall be sourced from Company funds, is **Php 1,600,000.00** Delivery of the above equipment to **PNOC EC, Bldg. 1, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila** shall be on or before **June 15, 2004**

PNOC EC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bids or to award to any bidder whose bid is considered the lowest calculated responsive bid.

This publication is also posted in our website at www.pnoc-ec.com.ph and in the DBM website at www.procurementservices.net.

(Sgd.) **ERNESTO S. SAN JOSE**
Bids and Awards Committee
Chairman

(PDI – March 31, 2004)

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-EDC
Energy Center, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio 1634 Taguig
Metro Manila, Philippines
Tel (632) 893-6001
Fax (632) 840 1575

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

2004-2005 ANNUAL CONTRACT ON EQUIPMENT RENTAL FOR LEYTE GEOTHERMAL PRODUCTION FIELD
EDC04-038

The contract duration is 1 year. The ceiling rates shall be based on the prevailing ACEL guidebook.

Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o I M Corcuera) starting **March 29, 2004** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos. Two Hundred (P200 00).

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues a pre-bid conference will be held on **April 15, 2004, 10:00 a.m.** at the Admin Complex, PNOC-EDC Leyte Geothermal Production Field, Tongonan, Leyte. Site inspection will follow thereafter.

Contractor, not yet included in the PNOC-EDC's List of Registered Contractors, who wishes to participate in the public bidding, in order to facilitate eligibility check/screening is requested to register with the said registration office by submitting the following basic requirements which should be maintained current and updated every year: 1) DTI Business Name Registration and/or Certified true copy of valid SEC Registration Certificate, as appropriate; 2) Current Mayor's Permit/Municipal License, 3) Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN); 4) Value Added Tax (VAT) Certificate of Registration; 5) Notarized statement that contractor/firm is not "blacklisted" or barred from bidding by any government agency, office or corporation, including, non-inclusion in the "blacklist" of contractors issued by CIAP. 6) Audited Financial Statements, stamped "received" by the BIR or its duly accredited and authorized institutions for the immediately preceding calendar year, showing among others, its total and current assets and liabilities inclusive of Income Tax Return and Receipt; and 7) Contractor's License, where applicable. A Certificate of Submission shall be issued to contractors upon approval.

Applications for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at the above address **not later than 2:00 p.m.** of **April 29, 2004** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC

BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI–March 31, 2004)

From the nation's No. 1 Newspaper: INQUIRER

JOB Market
Read it every Sunday with the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

OBITUARIES

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." 2 Tim 4:7

The Missionary Society of Saint Columban

mourns the death of

FR. FRANCIS CHAPMAN

who died at Maria Reyna Hospital, Cagayan de Oro City
on March 29, 2004 at the age of 90.

Fr. Frank Chapman was born in Fremantle, Western Australia and studied for the priesthood in Ireland where he was ordained on December 21, 1937. He was one of the first set of Columbans to be appointed in Mindanao the following year, being assigned to Tangub, Misamis Occidental (1938-1946). With the outbreak of war he frequently had to take refuge in the hills and forests above Tangub. He was then appointed in Ozamiz City and it was from there he led the first team of Columbans to Negros Occidental in 1950. He was superior in Binalbagan until 1956 when he was recalled to Australia to be appointed regional director. During his administration (1956-1966) he founded the Columban Seminary in Sydney. Fr. Chapman then became a member of the General Council in Dublin from 1966 to 1970. On his return to the Philippines he became pastor of Lugait (1970-1975) and Alubijid (1975-1984) in Northern Mindanao. For the last twenty years of his life he devoted his time to service at the cathedral in Cagayan de Oro City, daily hearing confessions for many long hours. As a tribute to his generous service in the Church he was given the Bukas Palad Award by the Ateneo de Manila in 2001.

The Funeral Mass will be held in St. Augustine's Cathedral, Cagayan de Oro City on Thursday, 1st April at 9:30 a.m. The burial will take place immediately after the Mass at the Columban plot at Bulua, Cagayan de Oro.

May he rest in peace.

"Only goodness and love will pursue me all the days of my life; I will dwell in the house of the Lord for years to come..." **Psalm 23:6**

LULU ROQUE NATIVIDAD

Peacefully joined her Creator
on March 29, 2004 at the age of 80.

Her children **Jed, Ruby** and **Dolly**; sons-in-law **Francis** and **Jiji**; grandchildren **Kitch, Jorel, Tongie, Tootsie, Laia, Miguel, Bosie, Gabby**, and **Quinito**, other relatives and friends request readers to join them in praying for her eternal happiness.

Her body lies in state at St. Jerome Emiliani and Sta. Susana Parish, Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

Cremation will be on April 1, 2004 at the Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque after the 9:00 a.m. Mass in St. Jerome Emiliani and Sta. Susana Parish.

"Even
when I walk
through a
dark valley,
I feel no
harm.
For you
are at my
side, your
rod and
staff give
me
courage..."

Psalm 23.4

CARD OF THANKS

The bereaved husband **Servando (†)**; children **Peping & Angie; Bobot & Malou, Bobby & Cecilia, Angeline & Vic, Larry, Maggee, Enchong, Nanette (†)**; grandchildren and other relatives of the late

JUANITA V. REY LARA

who passed away on March 22, 2004

wish to express their sincere appreciation and gratitude to all those who condoled with them, offered prayers and masses, sent flowers, visited them and kept vigil, attended the funeral rites and who in one way or another shared with them in their great loss and gave courage and strength in their hour of grief.

TERESITA BRUNO ALANO

of San Juan, M.M. and Marikina

Peacefully joined our Lord
on March 29, 2004 at the age of 52.

Her husband **Santiago**; children **Sannie James**, **Charrie Myn** and **Terrie Grace**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Eric Santiago Memorial Chapel, Bayan-Bayanan Ave., Concepcion, Marikina.

Interment will tentatively be on Tuesday, April 6, 2004 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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8 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
9 OTSO-OTSO
10 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
11 HIDALGO
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4 HIDALGO
5 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6 THE GRUDGE 2
7 SCOOBY DOO 2
8 50 FIRST DATES
9 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
10 BUTTERFLY EFFECT

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4 SCOOBY DOO 2

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2 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
3 HIDALGO
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 SCOOBY DOO 2
6 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
7 THE CURSE
8 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
9 OTSO-OTSO
10 THE GRUDGE 2
11 DONT' TEMPT ME
12 50 FIRST DATES

North

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2 SCOOBY DOO 2
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
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6 50 FIRST DATES
7 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
8 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

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1 BONE SNATCHER
2 WATER DEMON
3 OTSO-OTSO
4 SCOOBY DOO 2

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7120015

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 50 FIRST DATES
4 SCOOBY DOO 2
5 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
6 OTSO-OTSO

SM CITY BAGUIO
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1 TORQUE
2 WATER DEMON
3 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
4 SCOOBY DOO 2

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
2 KASIPING
3 THE GRUDGE 2
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 OTSO-OTSO
6 HIDALGO
7 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
8 SCOOBY DOO 2
9 50 FIRST DATES
10 KARIBAL
11 GOTHIKA
12 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

South

SM CITY LAS PIÑAS
8066888

1 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
2 SCOOBY DOO 2
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 50 FIRST DATES
5 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6 KARIBAL
7 OTSO-OTSO
8 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
9 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
10 HIDALGO

SM CITY BICUTAN
7763855

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2 OTSO-OTSO
3 SCOOBY DOO 2
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

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2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD

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1 THE GRUDGE 2
2 SCOOBY DOO 2
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 OTSO-OTSO
5 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
7 50 FIRST DATES
8 KARIBAL

SM CITY LUCENA
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1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
2 MEMENTO MORI
3 HAUNTED OFFICE
4 OTSO-OTSO

Visayas & Mindanao

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2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
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5 HIDALGO
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7 OTSO-OTSO
8 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

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4 TORQUE
5 BONE SNATCHER
6 GOTHIKA
7 RESERVED
8 LOVE ACTUALLY

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2 RING: THE SPIRAL
3 OTSO-OTSO
4 LOVE ACTUALLY
5 TORQUE
6 SCOOBY DOO 2

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3 TORQUE
4 DIABLO

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1
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12:40 FS/1:15
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LMF/11:30 END

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MF/1:55/4:35/7:15/9:25
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2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 THE MISSING	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	REPERTORY'S DRACULA April 2, 3 & 4	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	4 DON'T TEMPT ME		4 LOVE ACTUALLY THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
	5 SCOOBY DOO		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 50 FIRST DATES THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	5 SCOOBY-DOO 2
	6 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST			
	7 50 FIRST DATES			

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1 KASIPING
2 KARIBAL
3 GOTHIKA
4 OTSO OTSO
5 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
6 HOUSE OF THE DEAD

star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas)
tel 873.5004

1
2

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) tel 892.2503
PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 OTSO OTSO
2 TORQUE

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1 KASIPING
2 DEVIL IN THE DEEP
3
4

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

5 RESERVE
6
7
8
9

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1 KARIBAL
2 OTSO OTSO
3 SCOOBY DOOO-2
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
6 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
7 HIGHWAY MEN
8 SORUM
9 KASIPING

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 RESERVE
2
3
4
5

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1 HIGHWAY MEN
2 OTSO OTSO
3 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
4 KASIPING
5 SCOOBY DOO-2

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1 RESERVE

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson THE LOVER
Lords GOOD LAWYERS WIFE

Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 OTSO OTSO
3 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
4

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 HIGHWAY MEN
3 KARIBAL
4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
5 RESERVE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 . 879.2029

1 PASSION OF CHRIST
2 OTSO OTSO

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta Center

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

1 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3 PASSION OF CHRIST
4 PASSION OF CHRIST
5 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
6 HIGHWAY MEN
7 OTSO OTSO

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 PASSION OF CHRIST
2 50 FIRST DATE
3 PASSION OF CHRIST
4 BUTTERFLY EFFECTS

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121

1 50 FIRST DATE
2 PASSION OF CHRIST
3 SCOOBY DOO-2
4 PASSION OF CHRIST

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489

1 OTSO OTSO
2 THE CURSE
3 CHEAPER BY THE DDOZEN
4 TORQUE

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926

1 PASSION OF CHRIST
2 HIDALGO
3 GRUDGE-2

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 THE CURSE
2 HIDALGO
3 PASSION OF CHRIST
4 PASSION OF CHRIST

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel (049) 411.1146

1 THE GRUDGE-2
2 PASSION OF CHRIST
3 PASSION OF CHRIST
4 HIDALGO

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
2 OTSO OTSO
3 TORQUE

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 50 FIRST DATE
2 OTSO OTSO
3
4

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795-3320

1 SCOOBY DOO-2
2 OTSO OTSO
3 50 FIRST DATE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 SORUM
2 KASIPING
3 DUWAG LANG ANG SUMUSUKO
4 KARIBAL

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 HIDALGO
2 KASIPING
3 PASSION OF CHRIST
4 THE CURSE
5 BUTTERFLY EFFECTS

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Binan) tel (049) 511.8883

1 PASSION OF CHRIST
2 KASIPING

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558

1 PASSION OF CHRIST
2 GHOST HOUSE
3 KASIPING

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1 OTSO OTSO
2 HAUNTED OFFICE
3 KARIBAL
4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel 520.8914

1 RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 KARIBAL
2 50 FIRST DATE
3 BUTTERFLY EFFECTS
4 OTSO OTSO

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438 1657

1 KARIBAL
2 TORQUE

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To join, simply specify Cebu Pacific for your domestic or international flights and/or tour packages and charge your ticket purchases to your MasterCard of MasterCard Electronic card at any Cebu Pacific ticketing office or Cebu Pacific-accredited travel agencies and tour operators.

Every P1,000 in a single receipt purchase is entitled to one raffle entry. A P3,000 worth of ticket, for example, makes up three (3) entries. Only ticket purchases charged from March 15 to May 31 are valid as entries to the promo.

After purchase, call the MasterCard Hotline numbers 689-1000, 914-1100, or 1-800-107-250-000 (for provincial calls, toll-free), and register your 16-digit MasterCArd card number, Transaction Date, Transaction Amount, and Transaction Time as shown in your charge slip. An electronic raffle number will then be assigned to you. You can also email your entries to mastercard@lisa.com.

All entries must be enrolled on or before 12 midnight of May 31. At the MasterCard International office in Makati City. Four (4) winning raffle numbers will be electronically drawn to correspond to the three domestic tour packages and the Hong Kong trip package. Winning MasterCArd cardholders will be notified by phone and registered mail. The MasterCard accounts of the winners must still be existing and in good standing at the time of the draw and during the claim period.

To claim their prize, winners must present their winning MasterCard or MasterCard Electronic card and/or Cebu Pacific airline ticket, the official receipt of their purchase, the Official Notification Letter, their TIN, CTC, and any valid ID at the MasterCard International office in Makati (904 Tower One & Exchange Plaza, Ayala Triangle, Ayala Ave., Makati City).

SUBIC'S MOUNTAIN WOODS SIGNS UP WITH GENESIS

Mountain Woods Resort Hotel in Subic, Zambales recently signed a management contract with Genesis Hotels and Resorts Corp (GHRC). Mountain Woods is the newest resort inside SBMA and is also the latest resort/hotel to be under the management of GHRC, the same company that manages such hotels like the Astor Hotel in Makati Avenue, Astoria Plaza in Pasig, The Atrium in Pasay, The Pearl Manila in Manila, Robbinsdale Hotel in Quezon City, Cresta del Mar in La Union and Puerto del Sol in Pangasinan. A sister company of White Rock Beach Resort in Subic, Mountain Woods has 28 luxurious rooms. Situated on top of a hill, the resort's rooms have an unobstructed view of Subic's virgin forest, an infinity pool, a restaurant and function rooms that are good for social banquets or business meetings. Sealing the deal with a handshake are Mountain Woods chair George U. Lorenzana (seated 2nd from left) and GHRC president Miguel Cerqueda. Also present are Mountain Woods general manager Roger Pegre (seated, left), GHRC sales manager Joanne Hilario (standing left) and GHRC marketing director Cathy Veneracion. For inquiries, call 421-2781, 421-2782, 421-2784 or 421-2786.

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
National Capital Region
U.N. Avenue, Manila

INVITATION TO REGISTER AND TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID FOR PROCUREMENT OF EMPTY SACKS (MTS) SERVICES FOR NFA-NCR

The National Food Authority, National Capital Region, U.N. Avenue, Paco, Manila invites all interested qualified sack manufacturers / suppliers to register, apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of the following empty sacks (MTS) requirements for Luzon areas

	MTS (Kind)	No. of Pieces	Approved Budget for the Contract
1.	Procurement (MTS)	400,000	P 2,818,800 00
2.	Milling (MTS)	500,000	P 2,927,500.00

Application forms and list of requirements for registration may be secured from the RBAC Secretariat upon submission of a letter of intent and after payment of a non-refundable/non-transferable registration fee of P500.00

Only applicants with Certificate of Official Registration as sack manufacturer / supplier of Empty Sacks (MTS) issued by NFA-NCR may apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of NCR Procurement/Milling Empty Sacks (MTS) requirements.

The schedule of bidding activities are as follows:

		DATE	TIME
1.	Issuance of Application for Registration Requirements	March 31 to April 6, 2004	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
2.	Deadline of Submission of Application Requirements	April 12, 2004	12:00 NN
3.	Pre-bidding	April 6, 2004	10.00 AM
4.	Issuance of Application for Eligibility Requirements	March 31, 2004	8.00 AM - 5:00 PM
5.	Submission of Eligibility Requirements/Opening of Bids	April 19, 2004	10.00 AM

The Application Forms requirements for eligibility and to bid may be obtained from the RBAC Secretariat after payment of a non-transferable/non-refundable bidding fee in the amount of P2,000 00

Other inquiries may be addressed to the Office of the Assistant Regional Director, NFA-NCR, UN Avenue, Paco, Manila with telephone numbers 563-94-37 and 564-20-71 to 74 local 111.

THE NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS THEREOF, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITIES OR DEFECTS FOUND THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS OR AWARD TO ANY CONTRACTOR WHOSE BID IS CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE NFA OR TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) Atty. BASILIDES TACO
Assistant Regional Director
Chairman, Bidding Committee

(PDI – March 31 & April 6, 2004)

Fashion Exposé

The CSB Hotel will unveil a back-to-back fashion show titled 'Fashion Expose (the hot summer collection) of designers Lito Perez of Camp Suki and Millet Guinto of Designer Avenue on Friday, April 30 at the International Hall of Angelo King International Conference Center along Arellano corner Estrada Streets, Manila. Lito Perez was president of Fashion Designers Association of the Philippines, while Millet Guinto is the designer-proprietor of Design Avenue. For the show, Lito will unveil his 50 summer collections, while Millet will present her 30-piece at 7 p.m. after the cocktails at 6 p.m. For tickets, call the CSB Hotel sales and marketing department at 400-3333 or 400-5455.

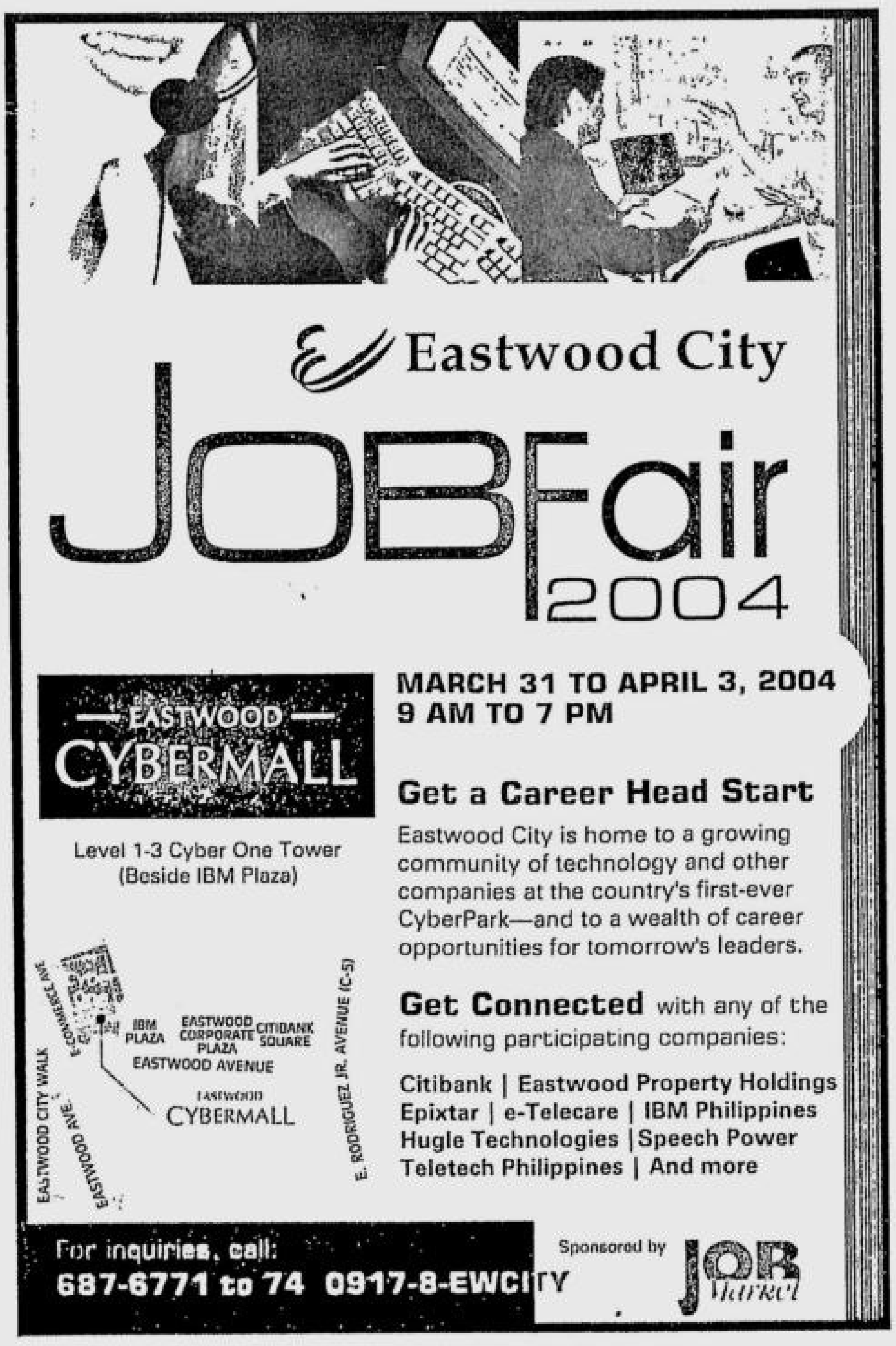
Fiorgelato

FIORGELATO COOLS UP SHANGRI-LA

Made from fresh milk and the finest Italian ingredients, enjoy the goodness of Fiorgelato-premium ice cream at the second level of Shangri-La Plaza, Edsa Mandaluyong. Be a part of its success, too, by making Fiorgelato the right franchise for you. Shown, from left, are president and CEO of Milkin Corp Ricardo Z. Cuna, Cuadro Foods' Tonette Mendoza, Tats Cruz, Lia Manuel and Mariel Garcia. For inquiries, call Lhiza Escanilla at 524-0384 or fax 524-0385.

VIVA JOINS CABLE CONVENTION 2004

Viva Entertainment Inc/Pinoy Box Office affirms its full support to Cable Convention 2004. Shown during the contract signing are, from left, Vicente del Rosario Jr, chair, Viva Entertainment Inc/Pinoy Box Office, Tony Selda, overall chair, Cable Convention 2004, director, PCTA, Ken Fortun, general manager, Pinoy Box Office and Allan Dungao, director, PCTA. Cable Convention 2004 is set to stage from March 31 to April 2 at the Edsa Shangri-La Manila, Mandaluyong City, Philippines.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ProductFILES

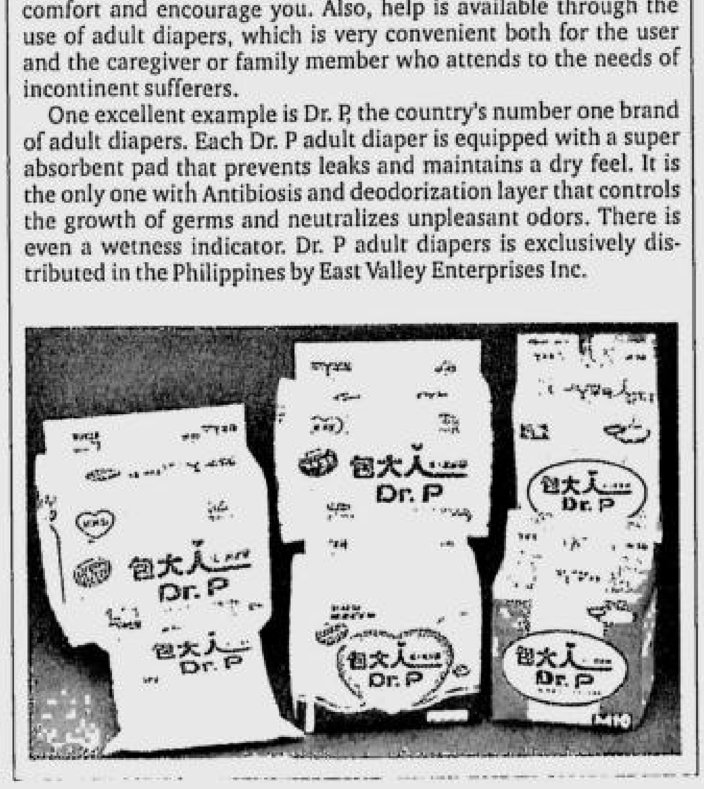
Let's talk about incontinence

A GOOD number of men and women are suffering from this condition, suffering silently, perhaps. But what, really, is incontinence? The International Continence Society Standardization Committee defines incontinence as "a condition in which involuntary loss of urine is a social or hygienic problem and is objectively demonstrable." Simply put, there is no control over bladder or bowel functions. One must go at any time, anywhere, no matter what.

Incontinence is but a malfunction of the urinary system brought about by several conditions and disorders like birth defects, multiple sclerosis, poliomyelitis, infection, and degenerative changes associated with aging. It can also accompany pregnancy or childbirth.

There are several ways to ease the discomfort and anxiety. Get a good assessment from your doctor. Keep yourself active and maintain social contact with family and friends. Allow other people to comfort and encourage you. Also, help is available through the use of adult diapers, which is very convenient both for the user and the caregiver or family member who attends to the needs of incontinent sufferers.

One excellent example is Dr. P, the country's number one brand of adult diapers. Each Dr. P adult diaper is equipped with a super absorbent pad that prevents leaks and maintains a dry feel. It is the only one with Antibiosis and deodorization layer that controls the growth of germs and neutralizes unpleasant odors. There is even a wetness indicator. Dr. P adult diapers is exclusively distributed in the Philippines by East Valley Enterprises Inc.



KAPLAN PAYS SENATOR A VISIT

Jon Kaplan (left), president of TeleDevelopment Services (TDS), visits Sen. Ramon Magsaysay, chair of the Senate Committee on Science and Technology. The two discussed pending legislative bills in the US Congress that could affect the growth of the Philippine call center industry. TDS, a leading contact center consulting, training and recruitment company, will be inaugurating its local headquarters and launching training programs for agents and call center supervisors March 31. Magsaysay will be TDS' guest of honor on March 31 at the San Lorenzo and Forbes function rooms of the Hotel Intercontinental Makati.

YOSHINOYA IN SM NORTH EDSA

Quezon City will now get a taste of the best beef bowl as Yoshinoya, the oldest and most popular 'gyudon' restaurant chain in Japan, is set to open another branch in SM North Edsa on March 31 with popular teen star Heart Evangelista gracing the event. Yoshinoya offers a tasty, healthy, and nutritious alternative to the usual fast food fare.

Young team finds fun, fulfillment in entertaining kids

By Candy G. Villanueva

IF you never tire of watching cartoons the whole day and there's that little child buried in you that just refuses to grow up, then there is a perfect job for you. At Nickelodeon, that youthful exuberance in you can be unleashed to deliver creativity and productivity. A TV channel for kids, Nickelodeon lives on a backbone composed of a young, dynamic and creative team.

Seen in over 100 million households, Nickelodeon Asia is a children's channel that aims to educate, entertain and keep young minds happy. In the Philippines, Nickelodeon maintains a production and marketing team to achieve its goals. Nickelodeon Asia's team is the silent wheel that keeps the reels turning to keep Blue looking for clues, SpongeBob frying patties and the Rugrats busy with their adventures.

Meet the team

Nickelodeon is best known for its original animation called Nicktoons. Among the favorites are Emmy-award winning "Rugrats," "SpongeBob SquarePants" and "The Angry Beavers." Toddlers also enjoy Nick Jr.'s "Blue's Clues" and "Dora the Explorer."

Seen in over 800 households in the country with dozens of programs 24 hours a day, it is surprising that the engine behind it is a small network team of five. The fab five not only makes sure that the well-loved cartoons and programs gets into the tiny audiences' tellies, the group also handles on-air promotions and productions, events and branded businesses including movies, licensing and merchandising.

TUNE INTO
NICKELODEON
TV JUST FOR KIDS

THE NICKELODEON staff

CANDY G. VILLANUEVA/CONTRIBUTOR

In a cluttered, colorful room packed with merchandise and freebies that would set little eyes aglow, five youthful individuals are constantly a buzz with ideas to implement and shows to tape. The group is composed of an Associate Producer, a Production Assistant, a Marketing and Communications Manager, a Marketing and Communications Coordinator and an Intern.

Recently, Nickelodeon came up with a new show called "Whacked." Although aired all over Asia, the show is shot locally and the Philippine team is responsible for all areas of production. Heading the pack is Jiki Lim, Associate Producer for Creative and Show Development. Bright, young and spunky, Jiki is in charge of all aspects of production for Nickelodeon Asia in the Philippines. She represents the Creative Director based in the network's head office at Singapore.

Associate Producer

Jiki writes, directs and produces "Whacked." In addition, she heads the team that handles TV coverage of all the network's local events. She is also busy overseeing production of on-air spots.

Although highly stressful, Jiki loves the creativity and flexibility her job affords her. According to her, the experiences she is exposed to daily are priceless. "The pay is good but the travel benefits are really great. This job takes you everywhere," Jiki remarks enthusiastically. In one week, her work takes her to Baguio, back to Manila and then to Singapore. Before she could savor the cosmopolitan air, she is whisked off to the United States to cover an event.

One usually has to pay for all the perks and Jiki does so by dealing with the demands. "The greatest challenge is to keep coming up with new ideas. The other challenges would be managing the stress of meeting deadlines and putting the logistics together," says the Associate Producer. "The work is time consuming and having to cover both creative and administrative responsibilities can take its toll on you. Having a production assistant around to help is really a great relief."

Production Assistant

The great relief is provided by Liby Ramos. As production assistant, Liby makes sure that each project goes smoothly. With the help of intern Angela Jiandani, Liby takes care of the nitty gritty details of production like securing shoot locations, budgeting staff and crew meals and production design.

ALL ABOUT WORK

Sometimes she even goes as far as substituting for the makeup artist. "You have to be very, very patient and your attitude must be flexible in order to have a harmonious relationship with all the people around you," says Liby of her all-around position.

The job is far from easy. Most of the time Liby has to be on the location ahead the usual call time. Not only does she have to provide everybody's needs, the production assistant also has to handle administrative work like accounting and marketing. "Since this job requires you to deal with a mixed bag of people, you must be outgoing and a good conversationalist. You must be willing to work overtime." In spite of the demands, Liby hardly complains. "I love almost everything. But the most exciting part of the job is meeting a lot of people. And I love all the characters of Nickelodeon especially SpongeBob!"

Getting word around

Once a show is set and shot, who gets the word around? Marketing and Communications oversees consumer, sponsorship, trade and cable affiliate marketing. As marketing and communications manager, Myra Monozca manages on-ground events, promotions and advertising. With the help of marketing and communications coordinator Ria Lacson, Myra also directs and manages communication activities that include channel public relations with media and key publications.

Because they contribute in the growth of the channel, the position requires a fair amount of experience in the field of marketing and communications. In Myra's case in particular, the job demands a "proven track record of successfully executing tactical revenue driven international marketing plans, experience in managing/supervising a team of marketing professionals in different locations." According to her, as a marketing and communications manager for Nickelodeon Asia, she must have a keen eye for detail with a proficiency in being a team player.

Sounds serious but Myra translates the responsibility to fun. "I love the fact that this job combines almost everything I'm passionate about—kids, fun, entertainment, creativity, music, and education. Having been given the opportunity to work with a group of creative, highly motivated, experienced, and dedicated professionals who share the same passion I have is a bonus," claims Myra with a hearty chuckle.

On a typical workday, "The Angry Beavers" constantly bicker behind the team's back as they work. The TV blares non-stop in the Nickelodeon headquarters as the team toil relentlessly, always remembering to keep their young audiences at the center of their colorful universe. Because as their philosophy dictates, whatever is good for kids, is also good for them.

WORKING MOM

Claim power of choice for balanced life

By Gina Abuyuan-Llanes

HAD one of my big "Maalaala Mo Kaya" moments last week. I was in the middle of editing a story on Amy Austria's beauty secrets when I was filled with the sudden urge to call the kids, who were at my in-laws'. "Ay, *nasa* park *sila*, Gina," my mom-in-law told me. "*Nag-stroller sila—ang saya-saya nila! Tawa nang tawa ang mga bata!*" If there's anything that can get my usually gentle Mama Del going, it's her grandsons, my twins Marco and Mateo (or me and her son fighting).

"*Ah, ganon ho ba? Mabuti naman.* Ok, thank you." I tried to sound happy, too. But inside, my heart was beginning to feel like it was being packed in an airtight jar. Tears welled up in my eyes. The demons of Working Mom Guilt and Resentment began to swarm in my head. To release them, I sent a sob story (well, more of a note) to my friend—and co-columnist—An Alcantara, telling her how torn my heart was; how I felt like crying because I was jealous of their time together, that I wanted to be with them, right then and there—but how I felt actually relieved and thankful that even if I wasn't there, my husband was, that at least the kids have got one parent who can be with them during the day, when most kids hardly see both during a 24-hour period.

Why can't I have that freedom to take them to the park when I want to? I wailed in my pathetic little note. Why?

Simple, was An's answer. Because you have chosen not to.

So much for my MMK moment.

She's right—as is the voice of reason when we really listen to it and not let our tendency for melodrama overcome our thoughts, feelings, and impulses. Sure, in a parallel dimension, I would be there: pushing their duo-stroller leisurely down a daisy-lined lane, my daughter Simone on Mardy's shoulders, our laughter echoing musically in the air. We would come home to a house that would never need any dusting, and where the cook's vegetable menu would not be limited to *chopsuey* and *pinakbet*. Mardy would attend to his thriving business during the day, while I, blessed with the luxury to write and assemble scrapbooks for the kids, would just do that—and never have to worry if I got anything published or sold.

But this is the real world, where I have chosen to dig up the dirt on Manila's drug-using elite, where I have chosen to listen to other people's stories and tell them on paper, where I have chosen to edit a magazine for working moms like me—and hopefully, make a difference in the lives of women ridden with the same angst I still feel sometimes. This is the path where God has led me to, where He makes sure my blessings become blessings to others. That moment, that editing-of-Amy-Austria's-beauty-secrets moment, is part of His great plan for me to make my own ripple in the universe, however infinitesimal.

So I quelled my tears and banished, once again, those crazy demons from my mind. Those pesky demons who feed your melodramatic self, so that you'll forget that you indeed have a choice whether to live happily—or be addicted to Famas-worthy, over-emotional spells.

That following Sunday, I claimed my power of choice. Instead of sleeping, we trooped to UP at 8 a.m. and found a nice little patch of paradise in the lagoon. Mardy and I held the boys, turning their little, fragrant bodies to feel the warmth of the sun. Simone hopped from brother to brother, kissing their soft, plump cheeks. Behind us, a *tai chi* master danced with the elements, and beside us, a family picnicked on *turon* and coffee.

It was a scene straight out of a feel-good movie. Except that this was real life—and somewhere above us and around us, angels were watching. And they smiled as they did so.

(*Gina Abuyuan-Llanes is Editor in Chief of Working Mom magazine. For more stories on loving your work, loving your kids, and the choices we make in between, watch out for the April issue of Working Mom, with Bea Lucero and Christine Jacob on the cover. Comments are welcome at* gina_llanes@abs.pinoycentral.com.)

Study reveals changing trends in human resource management

By Bo peep Franco

AMIDST the daunting challenges of a declining economy, lack of peace and order, rapid technology changes, increasing employee expectations and decreasing employee loyalty, businesses are looking for answers on how best to sharpen their competitive edge. How have all these affected human resource management in the country? Our study surveyed 120 Philippine-based organizations on how they were responding to all these challenges.

Emerging trends

The results suggest several emerging HR trends in the Philippines. One is that HR practitioners, especially those in multinational corporations, appear to be taking on the roles of change agents in their organizations. Another common response was the installation or development of an HR information system to achieve administrative efficiencies. In addition, more than half say they have moved their HR staff towards greater interaction with their peers in line operations, and educated themselves in the intricacies of the business. Outsourcing HR services, specifically management and employee training, was also a commonly cited strategy. Tapping outside expertise minimizes the need for a large HR organization, thus creating a leaner HR unit. These responses are also consistent with efforts to decrease HR budgets.

More changes

There is also a sense that the HR professionals will accept more changes in HR architecture over the next five years. Many expect to give up some direct administrative control through the increased use of technology such as shared services, self-service administration of benefits, and web-based training or e-learning.

Perhaps the most radical transformation we are seeing is the move to devolve HR to line managers. This means making line managers more accountable for certain HR functions such as employee selection, discipline, counseling, etc. In this new paradigm, responsibility for managing people is primarily a line function. Line managers must achieve results, and they do so through their team members. If managers do not know how to lead their people, they must be coached and trained. If they do not want to, they have no business being managers.

However, HR professionals are still responsible for enabling the organization to manage its people effectively. They must, therefore, set up the structures and systems and evolve a culture that will ensure the attraction, engagement and retention of the talents needed by the organization.

HR Guru David Ulrich describes four roles for HR: strategic partner, change agent, employee champion and administrative expert. The "strategic partner" role is one that focuses on aligning HR strategies and practices with business strategy. The "administrative expert" role is concerned with designing and delivering HR processes efficiently. The "change agent" role refers to helping the organization build a capacity for change and renewal. The "employee champion" role deals with attending and responding to the day-to-day problems, concerns, and needs of individual employees. Being an effective HR professional means being able to perform all these roles with balance and consistency.

Four HR roles

Unfortunately, it appears that local HR practitioners are better at more traditional roles of administrative expert and emplo yee champion rather than that of strategic partner and change agent. That is perhaps why HR practitioners also recognize that they need to develop new competencies that will make them more effective in their emerging roles.

Competency areas

We believe that the HR professional of the future must have five major competency areas:

- HR technical expertise. If HR is to be a credible strategic partner, it is basic that it shows a mastery of the field. This means being updated not only on HR technology, but also on theories about people behavior and human processes such as attitudes, motivation and learning.
- Business knowledge. HR services cannot occur in a vacuum. Immersion and interest in the business vision and direction are necessary to determine what the business needs and what kind of people will bring success to the organization.
- Organization development. The HR of the future will be expected to lead change and thus utilize the technology of organization development heavily. The HR consultants may not necessarily be experts in all aspects of the field, but must be knowledgeable enough on the process, principles and methodologies of change management and organization development.
- Interpersonal competence. The ability to build rapport and confidence with stakeholders is critical. This skill is basic to being able to dialogue and diagnose needs of the organization.
- Personal clarity. Self-knowledge, including values and ethics, is the foundation for delivering meaningful service.

Speed

In today's milieu where speed is the norm, it is becoming clearer that organizations need to become sharper, leaner and more agile. HR must evolve as well.

ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

This means changing paradigms, processes, structures and building the competencies of both the line and HR professional. If it is unable to do so, it will become irrelevant. The bottom line is that HR professionals must focus on enabling the organization to become more effective while ensuring the quality of work life of its members. By moving in this direction, HR practitioners will be a major force in achieving organizational competitiveness and national progress.

(*The author is the Executive Director for Ateneo Center for Organization Research and Development. This is a condensed version of a monograph entitled "Facing the future in HR" presented at the Ateneo CORD Trendwatcher session last March 10. For copies of the monograph, please contact* ateneocord@admu.edu.ph *or* 426-5931.)

PEOPLE at WORK

E-mail: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph
Editor **Raul O. Marcelo**
Subsection Editor **Regina Galang Reyes**

How do you survive politics at work?

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner

DEAR WW: The politics where I work is driving me crazy. I got off on the wrong foot with a few people here and now, I can't get anything done. Is there anything you can do to get back in the good graces of corporate politics?

I knew JFK, and I'm not JFK

Your fax reminded me of my high school English teacher. She gave two grades for each writing assignment: one for content and one for style.

That's pretty much how it works when it comes to corporate politics.

You'll always be graded for the quality of your work and for the politics surrounding it. And you'll be judged harshly if you don't attend to both. The tips below won't turn you into Gore or Bush, but they should help you increase your odds of success. For more, check out George-Anne Fay's "Will the Real Boss Please Stand Up" (Amacom, 1998).

Can you take on jobs no one else wants to touch? Popular projects usually attract the most attention and political game playing. So a great way to minimize the politics is to look for the wallflowers—those projects that don't look very attractive to most of your coworkers but have a hidden upside. You'll have more room to maneuver and will have to spend only a fraction of your time playing politics.

Do you look for ways to help the people you work with? Whenever the subject of politics comes up, we all tend to focus on backstabbing and brownnosing. We forget that there are also "positive" politics—building community, looking out for people, avoiding the temptation to do self-serving things. Do a favor for someone and you'll find that you add to your political capital and create a more positive place to work.

Are you choosy about the company you keep? One of my favorite quotes is "love thy neighbor, but pick thy neighborhood." Obviously, you can't always choose your coworkers, but whenever possible, you can volunteer for projects with people you trust. The more time you spend with those people the less time you'll have to worry about politicking.

Do you keep an eye on the pros? Every organization has people who get stuff done without knifing anyone else in the back. Keep your eyes open for these people and learn everything you can from them.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

Do you have friends in low places? Cultivating the leaders of your organization will create opportunities for you. But to do your job, you'll have to also cultivate secretaries, janitors and all those people who govern how things really get done in organizations.

Are you always networking? No organization is politics-free, but there are organizations where politics plays a minor role. If things at your company seem truly irremediable, it might be time to start looking.

Ironically, politicians have it easier than the rest of us. They run for office only every two, four or six years. The rest of us have to play politics virtually every day.

Here are the results of our last workingwounded.com/ABCnews.com online ballot: How would you rate your political skills at work?

—I win in a landslide, 25.6%
—I lose in a rout, 36.2%
—Too close to call, 38%

Developing leadership skills

By Jeff Wuorio

ON THE SURFACE, the difference between a step and a stumble seems pretty stark.

In the business universe, however, studied, proactive leadership is often indistinguishable from the downright inadvertent. The problem is, no matter if you stride toward a goal or trip, you can often end up in the same spot.

But knowing the difference between thoughtful leadership and the kind that almost happens by accident is critical—not only in your ability to grow and develop but to establish a pattern of success that's mandated, not miraculous.

Here, then, are eight attributes which separate genuine leadership from leadership that's more a matter of chance:

1. Real leadership means leading yourself as well. Passing out orders is as easy as passing out business cards. Like handing over a piece of cardboard, most leaders can spray orders at will. But, a prudent leader also knows how to lead herself—not merely to provide a genuine example to others, but to become a working element of the overall machinery of your business. "It's important that leaders have the ability to focus and motivate themselves as they motivate others," notes Larraine Segil, who teaches executive education at the California Institute of Technology.

2. Don't be a monarch. Thoughtful leadership likely means you already have a talented workforce in place. Terrific, but be careful not set up a throne room in the process. Accidental leaders often inadvertently establish a system of guidance that's unnecessarily restrictive. Guide them, but don't implement more parameters than are absolutely necessary. "It's important to influence the people with whom you work," notes Segil. "Don't see your business as a hierarchy."

3. Be flexible. One potential landmine of a prosperous operation is to repeat anything that proves successful. It's hard to argue against that, but an inadvertent leader will put far too much stock in sticking with what always works. By contrast, thoughtful leadership acknowledges success but also recognizes there are always ways to better what's already good.

4. Remember that Ward Cleaver is fast becoming a minority. Statistics show that white males now make up only a small fraction of the workplace population. Couple that with growing partnerships across borders and the importance of effectively blending a variety of cultures and backgrounds into the work environment becomes central. A thoughtless leader will try to cope with this as best as he can—one with more vision will work to take advantage of differences as much as he possibly can. "Competition—the constant push for faster, better, cheaper—mandates that we learn to effectively deal with difference in the workplace," says Susan Eckert of Advance Career and Professional Development. "Unbeatable will be the company that manages to seamlessly weave appreciation of diversity into its very cultural fabric."

5. Establish a genuine sense of commitment. I must admit this is a personal sore point with me, as I've seen more company slogans and catch phrases whose import is no deeper than the paper they're written on. Want to be "committed to superior service? " More power to you, but an accidental leader will see that as words and little else. Instead, put some meat on those bones—establish how to quantify excellence, put a cogent plan in place to achieve it and set a timetable under which it's reasonable to achieve.

6. Finish the job. This issue is a natural concomitant to commitment because it carries it to a natural conclusion. Again, many business leaders yak a very sexy game, but how many actually finish what they say they're going to start? This is a two-headed monster—not only can a thoughtless leader who never genuinely finishes anything lose the confidence of clients and customers, that lack of follow through isn't going to be lost on her employees, either. Instead, set goals and establish pragmatic, accountable measures to actually finish what you start. "The ability to complete things is critical," says Segil. "Nothing's useful unless you actually complete it."

7. Show real appreciation. Thoughtless leaders must have forearms the girth of Popeye's, what with all the back slapping they do. That's fine, but good performance should mandate a more substantive response. Leaders with an eye to the future also hand out praise, but augment it with real rewards—promotions, raises, bonuses and other tangible tokens of appreciation. That motivates your people, not only to apply themselves with greater enthusiasm but to stick around your company longer than they might.

8. Remember these are learnable skills. Far too may business executives believe leadership skills stem from some sort of wondrous epiphany or other such flash of insight. Sure, great ideas can come to any of us, but being a bona fide leader also means studying. Read books on effective leadership, attend seminars and pick the brains of colleagues to see what works for them. It can be an ongoing education, but one whose rewards magnify with the more knowledge you have under your belt.

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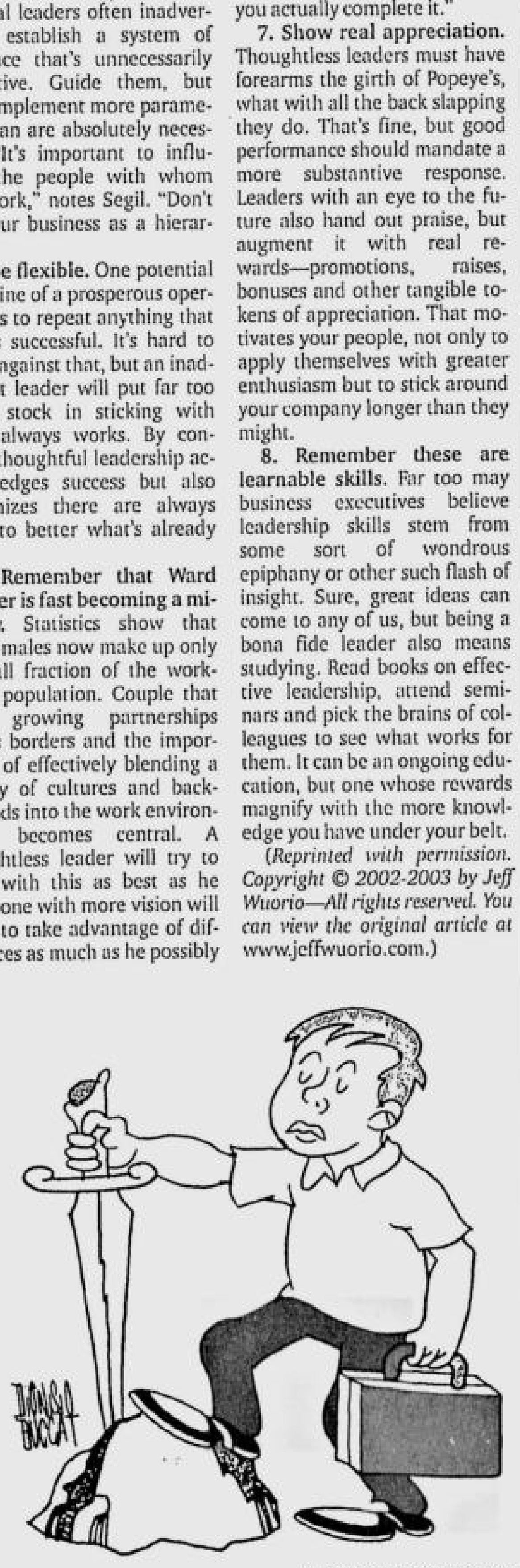

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On March 1, 2004, the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), likewise recognized Michel J. Lhuillier, President of M. LHUILLIER PHILIPPINES, as the Top Individual Income Tax and VAT Payer in RDO #81, for Calendar year 2003.

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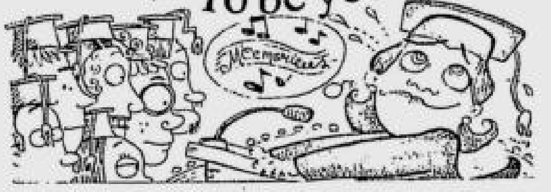
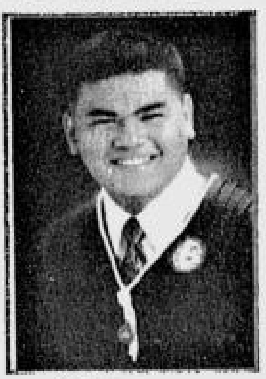
Toast to batch 2004!





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I don't want to graduate because . . .

Graduation day does not put everyone in a celebratory mood

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

OF course, everybody wants to graduate. But some things, people and thoughts sometimes make them reluctant to make that transition.

From things they can't let go to fear of what life will bring next, here are a few reasons why some students don't look forward to the graduation march.

College is scary and people there are mostly selfish and very aggressive.—**BB Pat, 16**

Wala ng baon after college. I'd have to work for my own money.—**Chelle Sambajon, 21,** who considers Blue Skies Crackers, Spring Onion her favorite *baon*

The real world is crazy and full of people who don't follow rules.—**Don, 22,** follows rules at the University of the Philippines Los Baños

I'll miss my friends and Comm(unication) and Philo(sophy) classes terribly!—**Bianca, 21, Ateneo de Manila University**

Work means everybody's going to be busy and I'm sure my friends and I will see less of each other.—**Tina Lamagna, 20,** belongs to a group of seven girls called the Wafakels

Spending four years in the same school made me quite comfy with the place and now I'm

I DON'T/C2

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MTW - 10:30-12:00 nn
SAT. - 10:30 - 12.00 nn

MODERN JAZZ
MWF - 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

LATIN DANCE
MTW - 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

STRIP TEASE
T-W - 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

EXERCISES

AEROBICS
MWF - 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

AERO KICK–BOXING
MF - 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

GYMNASTICS
T-TH-S - 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

SLIMNASTICS
M - W - F - 8:00 - 9:00 a.m.

TAEBO
T - TH - S - 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

MARTIAL ARTS

COMBAT AIKIDO
MWF - 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. - Children
3:30 - 5:00 p.m. - Adult

KARATE
T-TH-S - 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. - Children
10:30 - 12:00 noon - Adult

TAEKWONDO
T-TH-S - 1:00 - 2:30 - Children
2:30 - 4:00 - Adult

PERFORMING ARTS

BALLET
M-W-F - 1:00 - 2:00 Level I
2:00 - 3:00 Level II

FOLK DANCE

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T-TH-S - 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.
10:00 - 12:00 noon

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T-TH-S - 3:00 - 5:00

SWIMMING
Monday - Friday -
9:00 - 12:00 nn / 2:00 - 7:00 p.m.
SATURDAY
8:00 - 12:00 nn / 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
SUNDAY (SUMMER ONLY)
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Coffee break!
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Congrats graduate!
Bye from all of us!

- To send an MMS greeting, send the ff. to **2980**
character code<friend's Globe no.> <100-character personal message>
Ex. PP 09171234567 Congrats graduate!

- To view MMS greeting, send the ff. to **2980**:
character code<100-character personal message>
Ex. PP Congrats graduate!
You can forward this message to your friend.

Character codes:
Kandy Kool – KK
Nappy Nick – NN
Pink Panther – PP
Real Photos – PH (for MMS only)
Garfield – GF
Snufflebears – SB
Classic – CL (for SMS picture greetings only)

- To send SMS picture greeting, send the ff. to **2216**
character code<friend's Globe no.> <100-character personal message>
Ex. KK 09171234567 Bye from all of us!

- To view SMS picture greeting, send the ff. to **2216**:
character code<100-character personal message>
Ex. KK Bye from all of us!
You can forward this message to your friend.

Rates:
SMS picture message – P15
MMS – P20
Images you will get may vary from what is shown here.

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Graduation gift-giving 101

Here's a guide to doling out presents that aren't tacky or uninspired

By Kristine Ching
2bU! Correspondent

IT'S graduation season once again. Anyone who's in his or her final year—be it college, high school, or even grade school—is trying to meet all the requirements before the deadline—that and trying to cram hundreds of hours' worth of lessons in a few weeks of all-nighters.

Now, as a friend or a good sibling, you're expected to give a gift to a new graduate. You can always get a figurine of a naked baby wearing graduation togs, but seriously, how tacky can you get?

Since soon-to-be-graduates spend weeks pulling all-nighters, you probably will not recognize them with all the eyebags they get from lack of sleep. So, after graduation, they would want serious relaxation. Why not give them spa kits from Beauty Bar or Essences? Cheaper alternatives are available at Watson's and PCX.

If spa kits are way over you budget, aromatherapy kits are the next best thing. Sure, aromatherapy was the coolest gift a few years back, but there's a stall in Greenhills *tiangge* that sells incenses with unique scents like Opium. The incense sells for a hundred bucks, but hurry, because the *tiangge* may be gone soon!

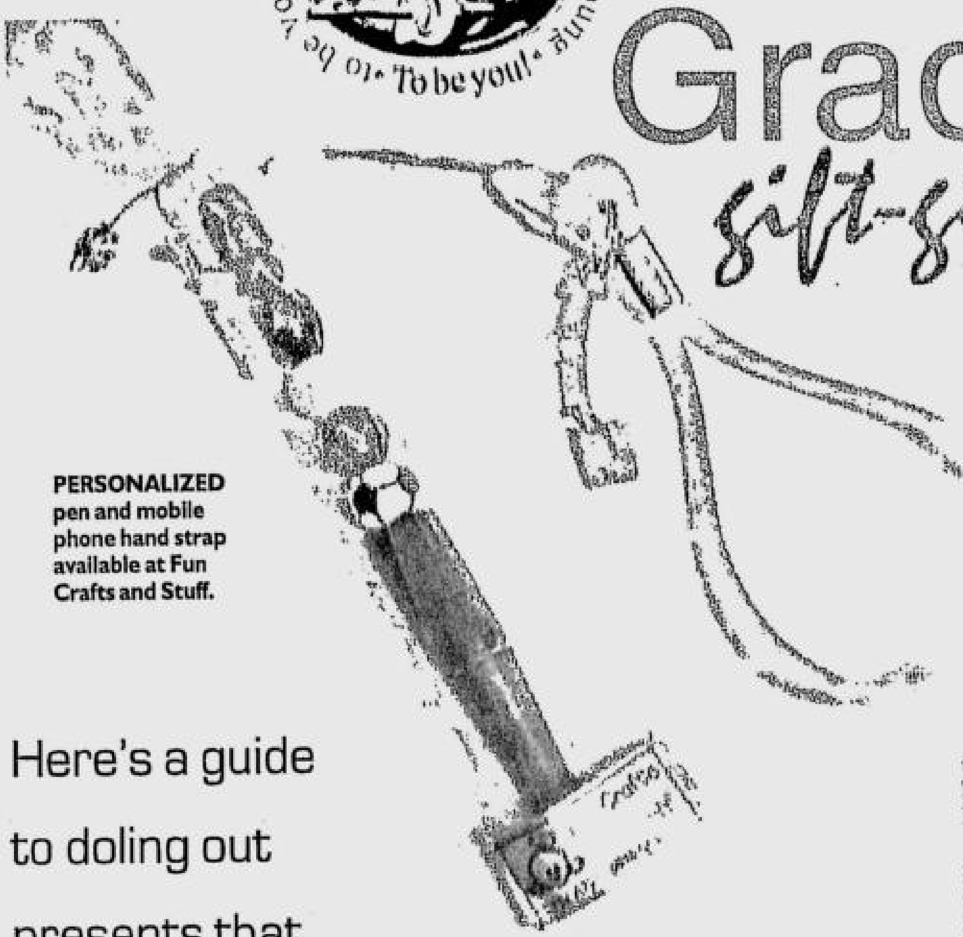
The last thing that soon-to-be graduates want when the school year finally ends is to be reminded of school. Talks of out-of-town or out-of-the-country trips are abuzz. Of course, a change of scene is surely refreshing especially after weeks of studying and doing projects.

Thus, give them travel books to guide them through their vacation. "Lonely Planet" books are recommended for people planning to fly out of the country. These guides are written by seasoned travelers, and the books sell for around P650-700 in Fully Booked.

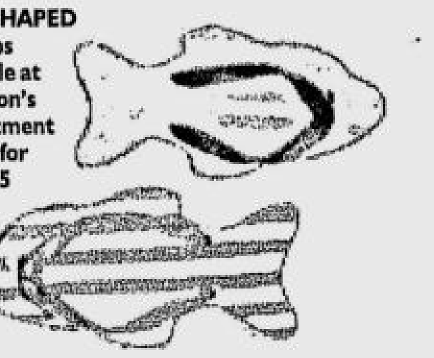
Summer stuff also make for good gifts, since majority of the student population will be headed to the beach. Fashionable flip-flops sell for P100-150 in department stores like SM and Robinson's, but if you want to splurge a bit, get the branded ones for over P700.

Accessories like the multi-purpose belts that sell for P90 in Greenhills are also good. Everybody's got to look good while on vacation.

If you're not sure about your friends' summer plans, why not give them personalized stuff? Establishments offering personalized services are in every mall, but this stall in Greenhills has pieces that glow in black light. Prices are variable. Call Fun Crafts and Stuff at 0916-5835247 or 7266721.

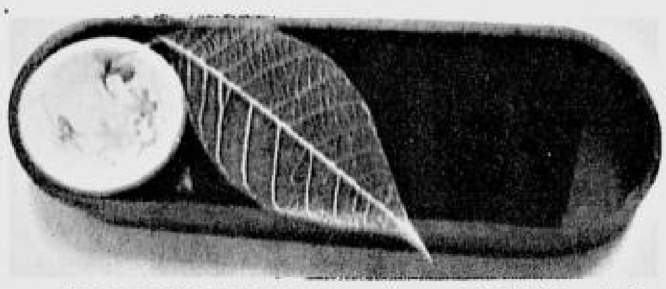


PERSONALIZED pen and mobile phone hand strap available at Fun Crafts and Stuff.

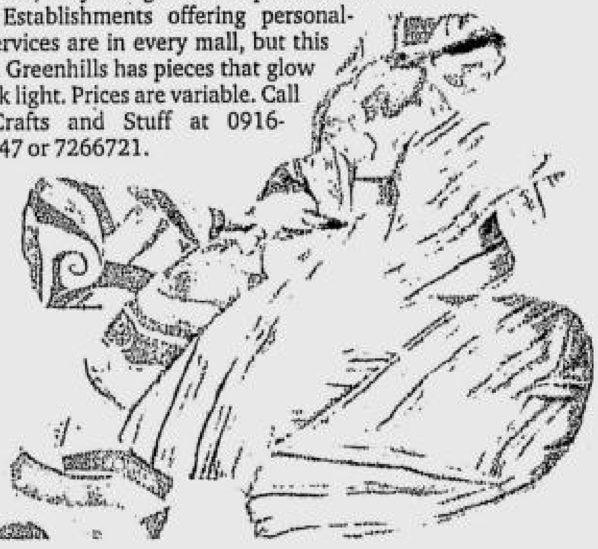


FISH-SHAPED flip-flops available at Robinson's Department Stores for P119.75

MEN'S beach slippers available at Robinson's Department Stores for P99.75



INCENSE available at Greenhills Tiangge for P100



MULTI-PURPOSE sash (sold as belts) available at Greenhills *tiangge* for P90

What to reward yourself this graduation

By Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

Sure, a diploma is reward enough, you say. But this should not stop you from treating yourself after nearly half a decade of hard work

AS far as milestones go, graduation ranks up there with newborns, weddings and first paychecks. It is the end to years of a student's hard work and the parents' prayers, support and financial sacrifices. After many sleepless nights of self-induced myopia, innumerable cups of coffee, and meters and meters of notes, it is time to give yourselves a break and do something to reward yourself.

1. **A massage.** What is great about having a massage—at home or at your nearest spa—is the feeling of getting a good eight hours of sleep after an hour of lying down. Getting someone to literally rub the aches and pains away is like getting someone to sleep for you. So if time and relaxation are two things you find important, then this little luxury is just the thing you owe to yourself after four or five years of hard work. Try to get a masseuse that does home services and just buy a bottle of Omega painkiller or your favorite massage oil. Not only is it cheaper (if you are charged P250 to P300 then this is already the usual rate), but you are also spared the burden of gas consumption and waiting in a room full of gossipy socialites.

2. **Get into a workshop.** When in school, we oftentimes have to set aside some things we would rather learn to make room for the things we have to learn. When you're in high school, you probably had to postpone dance sessions, taekwondo classes and language courses to be able to attend newspaper meetings, charity work and study groups. When you're in college, you were probably too saturated with your thesis, reports, practicum and possibly classes during the weekends to make room for anything else. In school, it may sometimes be difficult to grow any other way than your curriculum tells you. So after you toss your mortarboard away, sign up for the now-ubiquitous summer workshops. When I graduated from high school, I ended up spending my summer learning photography, French and taekwondo. It was also the summer I auditioned for 2bU!—not a bad way to spend my time before heading off to college.

3. **A haircut.** It is usually treated as a crime to sacrifice an hour of study time for something as vain as hair. Our tresses get longer, split-ended and beaten down by the elements. For girls, crumpling up the hair in a ponytail may keep them presentable for the rest of the day. For guys, shaving one's head will usually keep the need for a barber away for a few months. Now that you have some time for yourself, do something practical and get a decent haircut that will mark this milestone in your life.

4. **A movie marathon.** How many times do you have to borrow DVDs and watch movies while typing your homework? As a student, we have to perfect the art of multi-tasking—something that gets everything done but will not let us fully enjoy certain things in life. If you are a movie lover, you cannot have the full experience of analyzing flicks like "City of God" or "Run Lola Run" when you are cramming "The Anatomy of the Frog." This graduation is the time to rent all the movies you missed.

5. **A new wardrobe.** Unless you are a fine arts student, it is usually difficult to show your individuality through clothing when you're stuck in uniforms, lab coats or worn practically grunge clothes all the time. Anyway, who has the time to think of which shirt goes with which pants during finals week? But now that you are out of the school grind, whether permanently or temporarily, you can replenish your closet with clothes that will get you through your new life—whether through higher education or job interviews.

6. **A day out with your family.** It is always ironic when you realize that you barely even see the people you are living with. Nowadays, the level of stress starts very early in life that families sometimes cannot eat dinner together anymore. Busy schedules and beating deadlines are usually the causes of putting your loved ones on emotional call-waiting. Whether you go out and watch a movie or at the very least sit down and eat a long dinner, spend a little bit more time with the people who are largely responsible for your scholastic success.

E-mail the author at cathy_young1@yahoo.com

ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY MISTADES

I don't want to graduate because . . .

From page C1

afraid of the bigger world out there.—**Steph, 20**

Somehow, learning will stop because *wala ng* classes. I know *puwede paring matuto* after school, *pero iba talaga pag nasa* school *ka.*—**Ruel V., 19**

I might get a job that doesn't require a uniform and I don't have a lot of clothes!—**Kenji Benjie Boy, 20**

Masarap mag-aral.—**Wesley Palmas**, who will take up Law next school year

I'll miss all the fun moments you can have only in school because work is different *na*.—**Ricky, 20**

I have to part ways with friends. With separation comes emotional distance and this is a very sad reality. – **Misha, 21**

I'd be forced to say goodbye to my carefree days and ways. I have to be an adult *na*.– **Ley, 20, University of Perpetual Help Rizal,** loves choco peanut ice cream

No 'kickback' and cutting classes anymore!–**Kenny G., 20,** doesn't like the famous Kenny G.

I won't see my crush everyday. He's two years younger than me.– **Chino, 23,** chinito

School is a comfort zone and I'm not yet prepared to face the real world.– **Trix Allegre, 20,** lives in Cebu

Maririnig ko na naman yang "Farewell" *na yan at magda*-drama *na naman ang lahat!* – **Eleanor B. S., 19,** sang "Farewell" during her grade school graduation

Actually, *gusto ko naman mag*-graduate. I just don't want to attend the ceremonies because it's long and boring.—**Myrna T., 24,** dying to graduate and believes that not everything long is boring

Medyo seryoso na ang mga tao at ang mga bagay-bagay after college.—**Jillster, 21,** seriously in love

I would have to finally grow up and look after myself.—**Ant**

I'm gonna miss my friends who I won't see anymore. I don't like more work in college, but it seems nice to graduate..—**Twit, 13,** graduated from grade school last year

I don't want to graduate because it would mean leaving behind all my friends and the eleven years we had together. I won't see their happy faces or hear their laughter. Graduation marks the beginning of a new world, with entirely different people. I don't think I'm ready for that yet. Also, I feel as if I took so many things for granted during my high school years. I don't want to leave the school with regrets.—**Val, 17**

I don't want to graduate because when I do. I will have to change my routine completely. exert extra effort to make an impression and adjust to more people every single day! Hassle! He- he!—**Chay, 17**

It means having to attend useless graduation practice for two weeks, when everything that they tell us to do can be done in a day.—**Marla, 18**

With reports from Marla Cabanban
E-mail the author at katotino@yahoo.com

Duncan spearheads yoyo comeback in RP

YOYO, the classic toy which became a big hit among children worldwide during the last century, is set to stage a big comeback in the Philippines through a five-day promotional tour geared to revive interest in what is acclaimed as the world's coolest skill toy.

Spearheading the revival campaign is Duncan Toys, the toy company whose name is synonymous with the authentic, original yoyo.

US national yoyo master Steve Brown is now in Manila for a series of yoyo workshops and demonstrations for kids in selected shopping malls in Metro Manila.

Brown, who is Duncan's marketing and promotions coordinator, will be joined by an elite Duncan crew from Singapore as he performs his repertoire of yoyo tricks that have endeared him to millions of fans worldwide.

The Duncan exhibition tour schedule: March 31, 4 to 6 p.m., lower level, Glorietta 2; April 1, 1 to 3 p.m., Kidz Station, Rockwell; and April 2, 4 to 6 p.m., Atrium, Shangri-La Plaza Mall.

In-store exhibitions are also scheduled on April 2, 1 to 3 p.m. and April 4, 2 to 4 p.m. at Toy Kingdom, SM Megamall. Call 3739600.

Before coming to Manila, Brown served as a judge in the Singapore yoyo Championship held recently at Millenia Walk as part of the massive yoyo promotional blitz in Asia and the Pacific region.

Only one of seven yoyo players to hold the title of US national yoyo master, Brown won first place in the 2001 Bay Area Classic Invitational-Freestyle (while blindfolded), duplicating his initial feat in the same contest in 1999.

Yoyo is considered as the second oldest toy in the world (after dolls), but its modern story started with a young Filipino named Pedro Flores who brought the Filipino version of the toy to America in the 1920s. He established a company to produce the toys, until he sold it in 1929 to Donald F. Duncan.

With more than 600 million pieces sold, yoyo is acknowledged as probably the most popular toy in history. It was recently inducted into the US National Toy Hall of Fame.

Duncan yoyo is exclusively distributed in the Philippines by Ban Kee Trading, Inc.

If my college life were . . .

From page C4

had no idea what I should do with my life. Reality really bites!—**Razielle Ann Ambat, 25, Journalism, UP Diliman**

"Musical Chairs." I thought of this title because my college life was like the children's game "Trip to Jerusalem." From business administration, I shifted to different courses—masscom, then European languages, and finally, education. I guess it took a while for me to learn my true calling. I realized I wanted to become a teacher, as I love dealing with children.—**Excel Dyquiangco, 27, Education, UP Diliman**

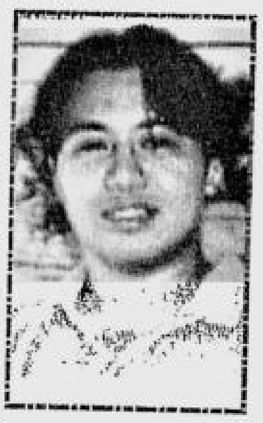
"Forrest Gump." I would say college life is like a box of chocolates—you'll never know what you're gonna get. I transferred school, shifted to a different course, earned some new friends, and of course—a new girlfriend.—**Darwin B., 24, BS Nursing, Manila Doctors College**

"Unleashed." College life was a series of awakenings for me. There were things I thought I already knew until my life in college proved otherwise.—**JV Villacorta, AB English, Philippine Normal University**

"Survive!" Back in high school, I just practically took the Math subject for granted. But in college, I took up engineering! I realized I should've taken more time to think about it after I got the shock of my life on my first year of college, especially since my classmates were really into computations and measurements. Thankfully though, I was able to finish my course, and even practice what I've studied in my job now.—**Oscar Sanglay, St. Louis University-Baguio, BS Electronics Communication Engineering**

"Weaving." As a writer, I like one-word titles, so "Weaving" is my choice. It means weaving through life or something like that. (She says the trailer should be cool so the film won't be mistaken for a tele-*aralan* movie.)—**Libay Linsangan Cantor, Film and Audiovisual Communication, UP Diliman**

E-mail the author at lhen@postmark.net



"SPICES." All the things I've done and experienced in college were like spices. Some were sweet, the others bitter, sour, chili hot. Together, these experiences added good flavor to my life! —Herbert Young, 24, Information Services Management DLSU-College of Saint Benilde

"THESIS." I almost failed to graduate on time because of my thesis! The memories of my "thesis days" are still fresh in my mind, and I've come to realize that, somehow, those difficult days helped me deal with a lot of other "crises" in my life.—Emily Telmo, 24, BS Biology, Cavite State University

"REALLY Meant to Be." I was supposed to take up accountancy but somehow wound up studying management. Now I realize that changing my mind on what course to take was one of the best decisions I made. Perhaps I was really meant to study it. *Parang* lovelife *ko* rin.—Marycelle Patawe, 25, Business Management, Philippine Christian University-Dasmariñas

Maningning Miclat painting award

THE MANINGNING Miclat Art Foundation Inc. (MMAFI) is holding the 2004 Maningning Miclat Painting Award, in honor of the late poetess-painter-teacher. It is open to all young painters, 28 years old and below. Deadline is on April 3.

The grand winner will receive a Ramon Orlina sculpture trophy and P28,000 cash.

Send your original entries to the UP Vargas Museum, under its curator, Dr. Ana Labrador. Entries may be in oil, watercolor, acrylic or mixed media. Three-dimensional works are allowed, provided the final product is wall-bound.

Entries must be framed, with a minimum size of 45 cm x 60 cm and a maximum size of 120 cm x 180 cm or equivalent area without the frame.

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2BU! SURVEY

'If my college life were a movie, it would be called...'

By Arlene M. Paredes
2bU! Correspondent

2BU! asked a number of college graduates to briefly ponder on how their college days were spent. And just for fun, we asked them to come up with a title—original or borrowed—in case their college life would be chronicled in a movie:

"Jologs." Life at UP Manila was actually wonderful! I got to know people beyond their exterior "labels," especially the "nerds." Sure, there were jocks, prom queens (and kings), goody-goodies and so on, but everyone was human and had his or her flaws. Despite these, they still managed to be decent and kind to one another.—**Anna Gan, Philippine Arts, UP Manila**

"The Providence of Time." I guess my college life prepared me to handle things now that I'm in the "real world." I wouldn't say the academic part of my college life helped, but the personal experience truly aided me.—**Eunice Malijan, 21, Mass Communications, St. Joseph's College, QC**

"A Few Good Pens." I have been a writer for almost all my college days, and the pen has become one of my most precious tools. I've realized there are two important things that come with handling a pen: truth and responsibility. However, in and outside the campus, I have seen only a few of my fellow writers uphold those two things. **Gizelle Khan, 23, Journalism, University of Santo Tomas**

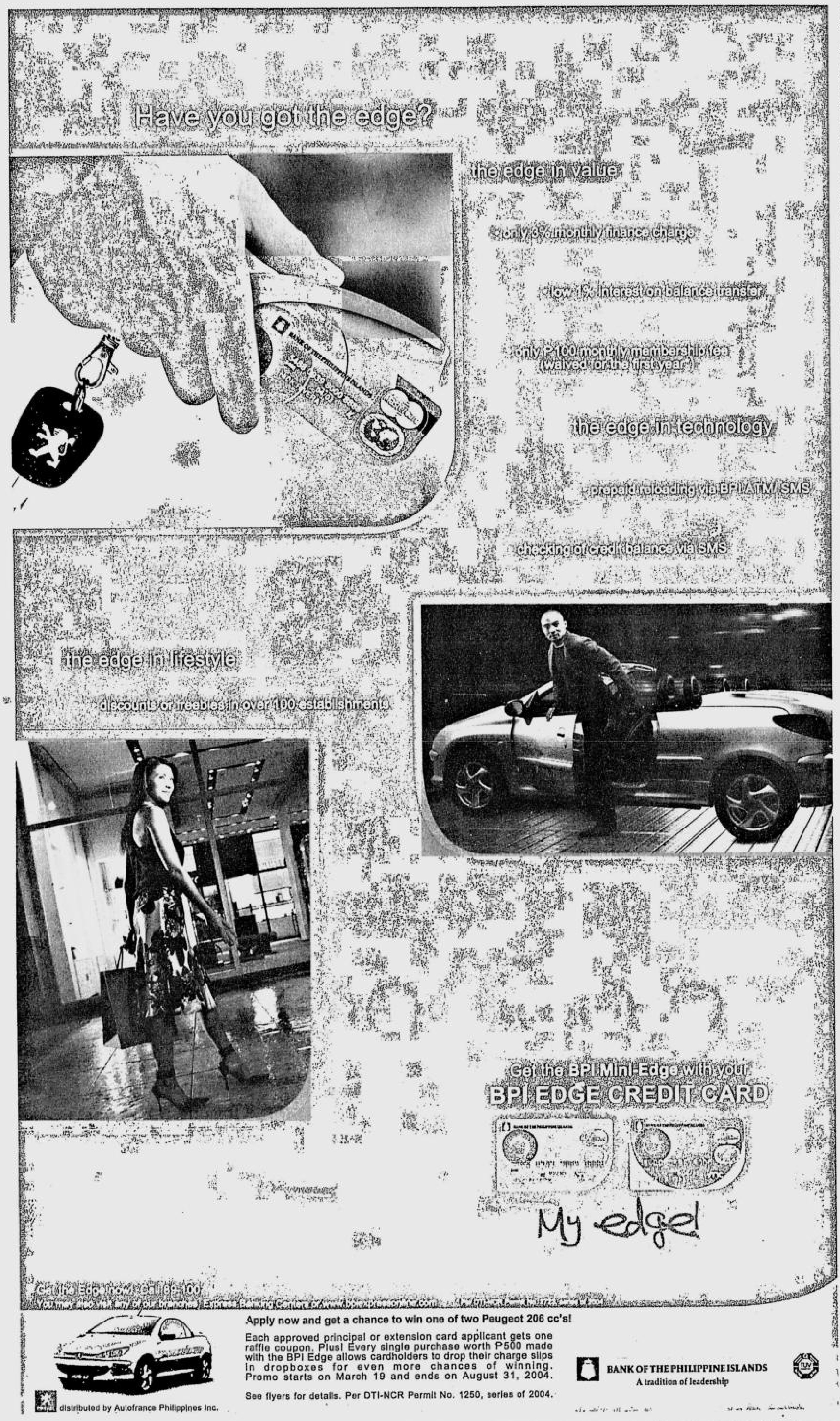
"Reality Bites." In college I hung out a lot with my *barkada*. I was totally confused about my guy best friend. And after graduating, I

IF/C3

"LIFE is Beautiful." College life was difficult for me but the entire package was just... beautiful!—Guada Ramos, 24, Development Communication, University of the Philippines, Los Baños

"CURACHA." I thought of this title because back then, I would describe myself as "*lalakeng walang pahinga*." Imagine, I had a class from Monday to Saturday from 3-7 p.m. and had ROTC on Sundays, 6 a.m.-12 nn for two years. I was in UST practically every day!—Jerome Masangkay, 26, Commerce, University of Sto. Tomas

"TRAUMATIC." This is the first word that comes to my mind when I think of my college life. The most difficult part was completing my thesis, and I was really very stressed at that time.—Pops Baylon, Communication Research, UP Diliman



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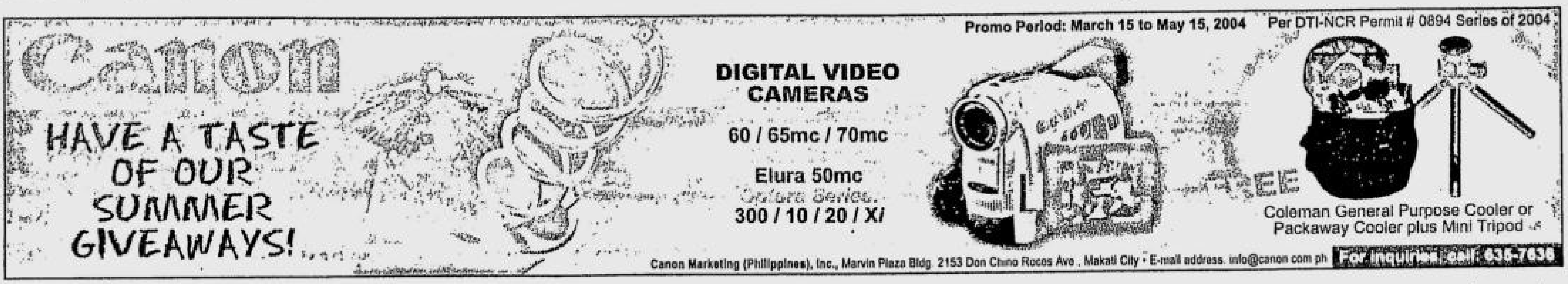

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Here are stories of famous people who never finished school—but became successful anyway

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Highway to the real world

By Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

IT was George Bernard Shaw who once said that "I cannot learn anything that does not interest me." He turned his back on school at 16, and is now considered the most significant English dramatist since William Shakespeare.

For many, getting a formal education may not be the way to go. The four walls of the classroom may seem stifling to some. Others are crippled by the sliding economy. And many find that the opportunity to make it in the real world has knocked on their door a few years too early.

Formal education may be the norm, but as many have proven, this is not the only way to train young minds for their path in life. Although we at 2bU! stress the importance of staying in school, we also cannot imagine a world without the choices made by these people who have proven themselves in their field.

Fair lady

Julie Andrews was in many stage performances with her mother and her stepfather in London, including one for the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret. At 12 years old, she made her solo debut at the London Hippodrome in "Starlight Roof."

This was the turning point of her career, as she became a star overnight. She dropped out of high school, and at 18, flew to New York City to star in the Broadway production of the musical "The Boyfriend." With starring roles in productions such as "My Fair Lady," "Camelot," "Cinderella," "Mary Poppins" and "The Sound of Music," this Oscar-winning dame has proven that you do not necessarily need a diploma to make your mark in the world.

Video geek

Filmmaker Quentin Tarantino has truly come a long way from his former job as a video store clerk. During his five-year employment at Video Archives, he entertained his customers, including some industry players, with his passionate video recommendations. It was there that he met film school-trained Roger Avary, who would later be his collaborator in writing screenplays.

The two were hired by producer John Langley, who was a regular customer. Tarantino later won Oscar, Golden Globe and several critics' awards for the screenplay of "Pulp Fiction." Not too shabby a deal for a high school dropout who worked half a decade behind the counter.

News king

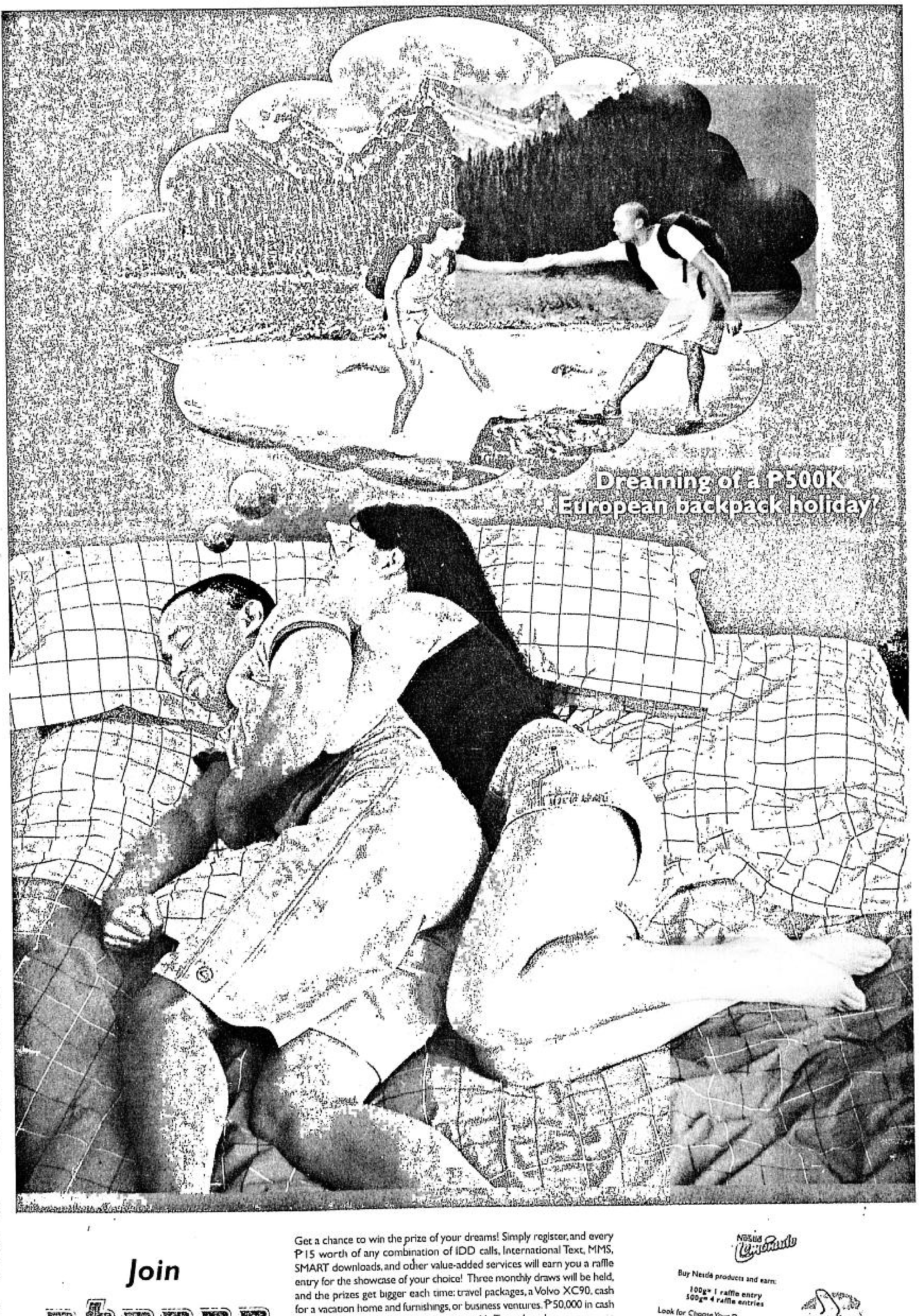
Many people believe that journalists have to have a college degree to get employed. Not so for ABC anchor Peter Jennings, who, at nine years old, was already hosting a children's radio show called Peter's Place. In school, he was a poor student and dropped out.

But inheriting the love of journalism from his father, he became the youngest anchor on ABC. His coverage of the Bosnian crisis, AIDS and the Challenger shuttle explosion (to name a few) has made him a prominent name in media. His work on the Gulf War dethroned Dan Rather as king of the evening news, as he was one of the few journalists who was able to interview Saddam Hussein.

Harvard dropout

Probably the most famous computer geek in the world, Bill Gates is also the most famous Harvard dropout. He is also a good example of starting one's career early

HIGHWAY/ D2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View from the top

By Leslie Tan
2bU! Correspondent

On graduation day, I could not remember Cramer's Rule but I remember the moments that marked my passage

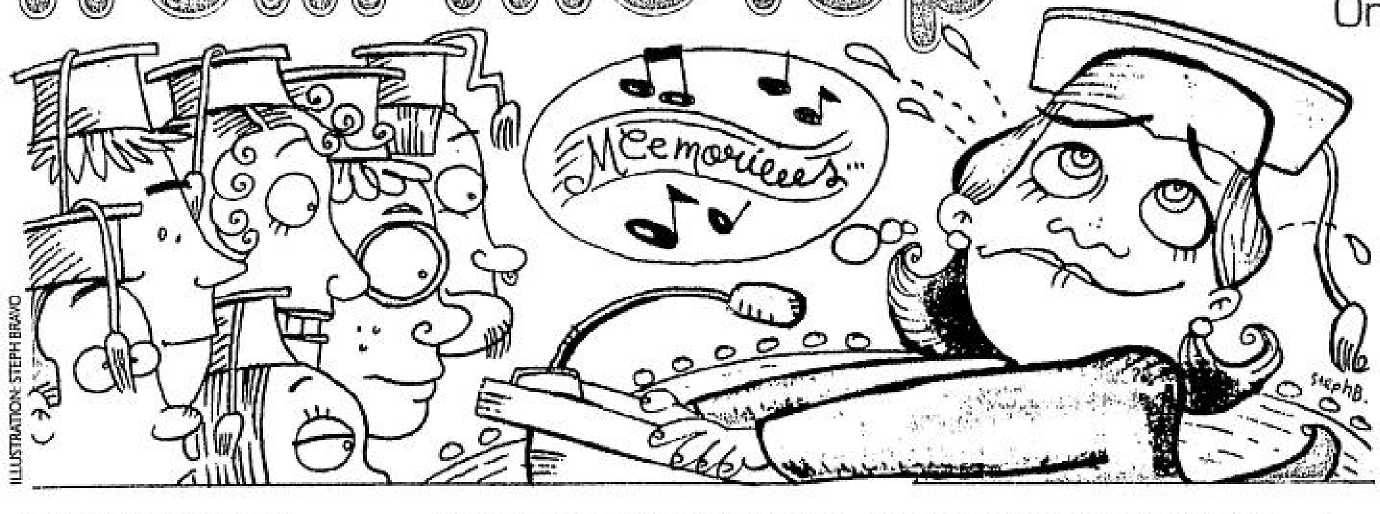


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

AFTER four years, I thought I had a mouthful to say. But when the day finally came, I was speechless.

The night before graduation day, I remember the moments that would mark my passage. I did not have a decent valedictory speech on hand. My training in debate should have prepared me to come up with an extemporaneous speech, complete with arguments and evidence, in 15 minutes. Not this time.

The big picture

Graduations have a way of putting things into perspective. Suddenly; you stop worrying about a failed test, a disappointing grade or a petty fight. You stop sweating the small stuff, and instead focus on the big picture.

How could I sum up all my thoughts in a speech? How could I even think that a speech was adequate to express them?

When I look back to my college days, for the life of me I could not remember the Cramer's Rule or the Lagrangian of a set of functions. I could tell you what a devalued peso would mean for Philippine exports, but perhaps never get to predict how the exchange rate would behave.

But I remember the moments that would mark my passage.

I remember the first time I entered the university in Diliman that welcomed me with open arms of the Oblation. A favorite symbol of mine, I felt the Oblation said it all—here was an institution that celebrated diversity not just of peoples but, more importantly, of thought. And I basked in that privilege...

Lesson in humility

I remember the time I was locked out of the classroom because I was late. As it was the first time, I was both humiliated and furious. The episode taught me great humility, not to mention punctuality. Of course, it helped when three years later, my professor explained...

I remember the long walks along the tree-lined oval, taking quick breaks in the fishball stand and just hanging around the campus even though classes had long ended...

I remember not so much the lessons, but the professors who pushed us hardest. We had one professor whose lectures lasted six long hours but I found them most interesting.

In one midterm test, he wouldn't let us leave the room until we got the answer right. Another professor mixed philosophy with economics. Our assigned readings included "Animal Farm" and "The Little Match Girl." He was quite simply—brilliant. These are the memories I miss most.

End of the long march

Graduation day was a bit of a blur. When it was time for me to deliver my speech, I recall taking a deep breath and looking into a sea of faces. Time actually stood a bit more still, and my voice quivered as I spoke.

People told me later that they thought I was crying. I'm not quite sure now, but I must have been. I guess I realized that this was it. The end of a long march.

It was so hard to let go of that day. I knew deep down I would never see many of these friends again.

Two years down the road, I was proved right. I've lost touch with about 75 percent of my classmates. We all had lives to lead. I heard some had moved to the States, while others settled in their provinces. Most were still in the metro.

These days, I often get asked two questions—how it felt to graduate on top and what was the best thing about college.

To the first, I reply simply that it was a great chapter in my life, but we can't live on past glories and must move on to even greater things. To the second, I can only sigh and say the best thing about college was that moment—the moment when I felt that everything and anything was possible.

Highway to the real world

From page D1

on.

He began his career in the software industry by programming computers at the early age of 13. As a Harvard freshman, he lived down the hall from SteveBallmer, now the president of Microsoft. During his stay, Gates developed a version of the programming language Basic for the first microcomputer, the MITS Altair.

In his junior year, he dropped out to devote his time to a little fledgling company called Microsoft. Dropping out was paired with a vision—the belief that the personal computer would be a valuable instrument in every home. Now he's the richest man in the world.

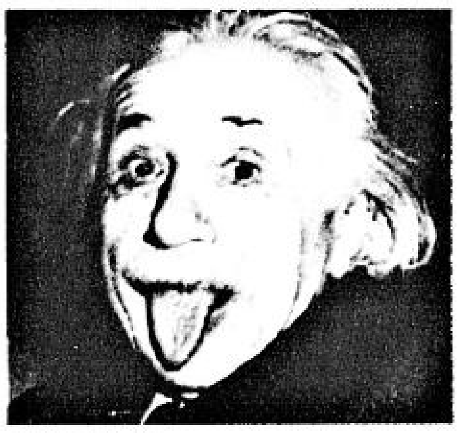
Inspired thinker

Even the great Albert Einstein never did particularly well in school. As a child, he was always inquisitive about nature, but he hated the dull regimentation and unimaginative spirit of his Munich education.

After a business failure, Einstein's family moved to Milan. He used this as a reason to withdraw from his German school, and eventually finished secondary school in Switzerland, and entered the Swiss National Polytechnic in Zürich. But he often cut classes, using the time to teach himself physics or to play his violin. He managed to graduate only by studying the notes of his classmate.

Because of his bad reputation with his professors, Einstein was never recommended for a university position. Still, his inspired theories on relativity and the particle nature of light show that this Nobel laureate's genius would not be hampered by classroom walls.

E-mail the author at cathy_young1@yahoo.com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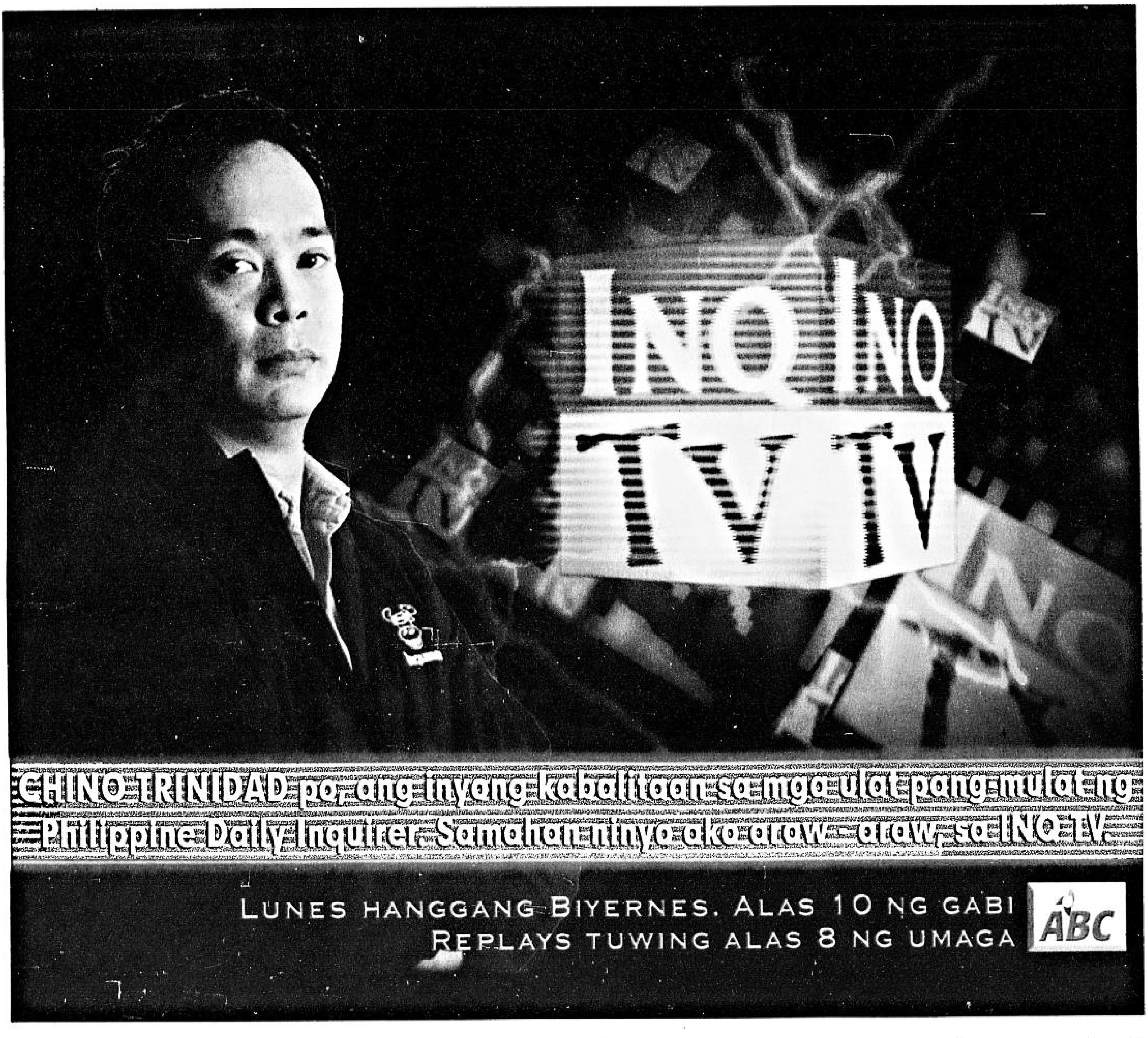

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Tunes to go with the toga

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

> Graduation tunes are real tearjerkers and mainly about saying goodbye to friends

WHAT is probably the most famous and most sung graduation song in the country is Raymond Lauchengco's "Farewell." It would be pretty safe to say every school in the Philippines has used it as graduation song at least once.

Who wouldn't be charmed by a simple song that perfectly captures the sentiments of a graduate? Someone wearing a toga can't help but shed tears over the lyrics: "Farewell to you my friend/ we'll see each other again/ don't worry coz it's not the end/ of everything."

The first few notes and lines alone have people teary-eyed: "We used to be frightened and scared to try/ Of things we don't really understand why/ We laugh for a moment and start to cry, we were crazy."

Since many private schools in the country are Catholic, it is common to hear religious songs on graduation. In high school, our graduation song was "Forever Friends," from a Christian artist named Sandi Patti. It's a very moving song and has a beautiful melody.

It talks about how friends can remain friends despite change and distance: "We're forever friends/ Bound by love that time can't take away/ Forever friends caring in a special kind of way/ Heart to heart and hand in hand/ We'll stand until the end/ Love's forever when you're forever friends."

Funky tunes

Some schools today allow the use of more contemporary and funkier tunes like Vitamin C's "Graduation (Friends Forever)."

It has questions graduates might want to ask themselves: "Will we think about tomorrow like we think about now?/ Can we survive it out there? Can we make it somehow?." It even has some suggestions: "And if you got something that you need to say/ You better say it right now cause you don't have another day."

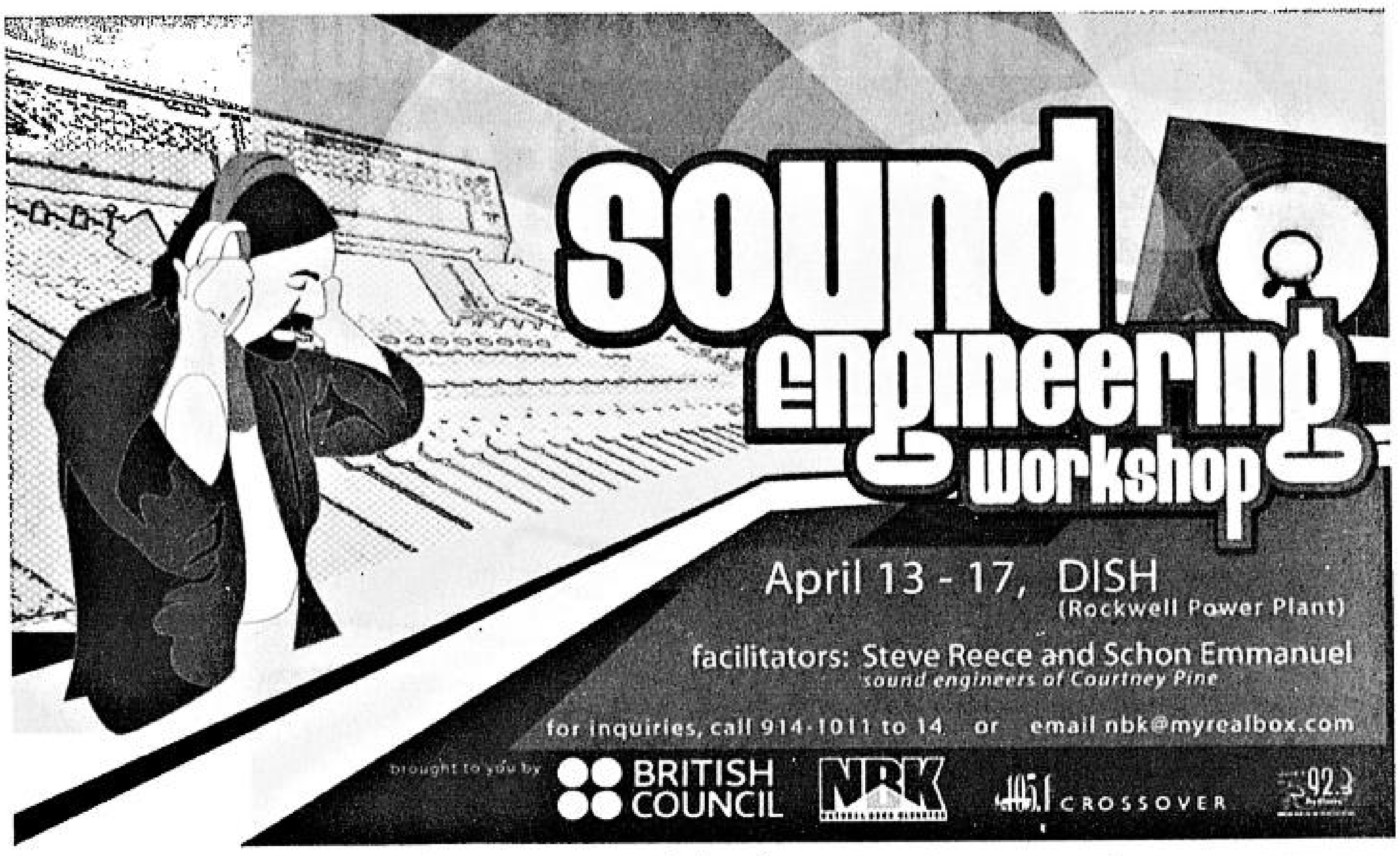
Some schools have gone over the top (in a good way) by encouraging students to write graduation songs, even holding contests, the winner of which gets to lead the class in singing his composition.

My favorite graduation song is "Sometimes" from the Carpenters, which we had for our grade school graduation. Although I was moved by the sad melody then, but it was only much later that I fully appreciated its wonderful lyrics: "Sometimes not often enough/ We reflect upon the good things/ And those thoughts always center around those we love/ And I think about those people who mean so much to me/ And for so many years have made me so very happy/ And I count the times I have forgotten to say 'thank you'/ And just how much I love them."

Most of these songs sing about one thing: friendship. And we all know how important this is in our school lives. Our friends are our family sometimes. There are instances when we get to spend more time with them than people related to us by blood. Our friends were with us during a lot of important "Kodak" moments and videocam-worthy scenes. Happy times, sad times, crazy times at school. Green Day sums it all up in one line: "I hope you had the time of your life."

Now you have to excuse me as I sing along to Ate Shawi's highly addicting "High School Days."

E-mail the author at katotino@yahoo.com.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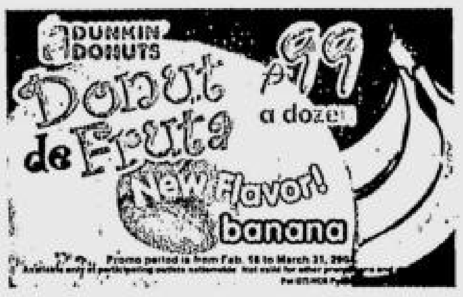
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CHARLIZE Theron and the author

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By Patricia Ocampo
Contributor

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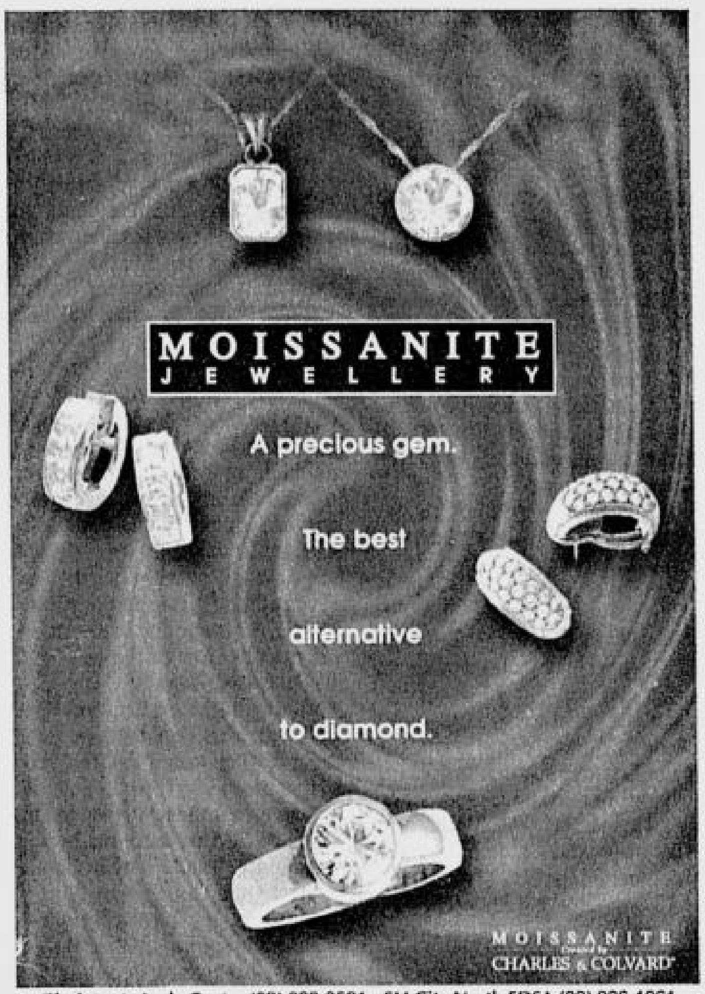
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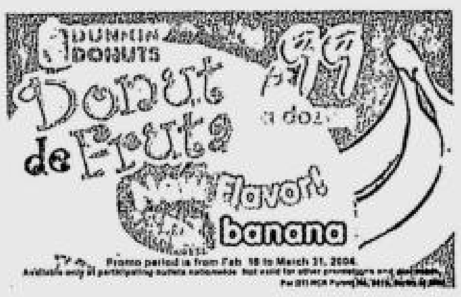

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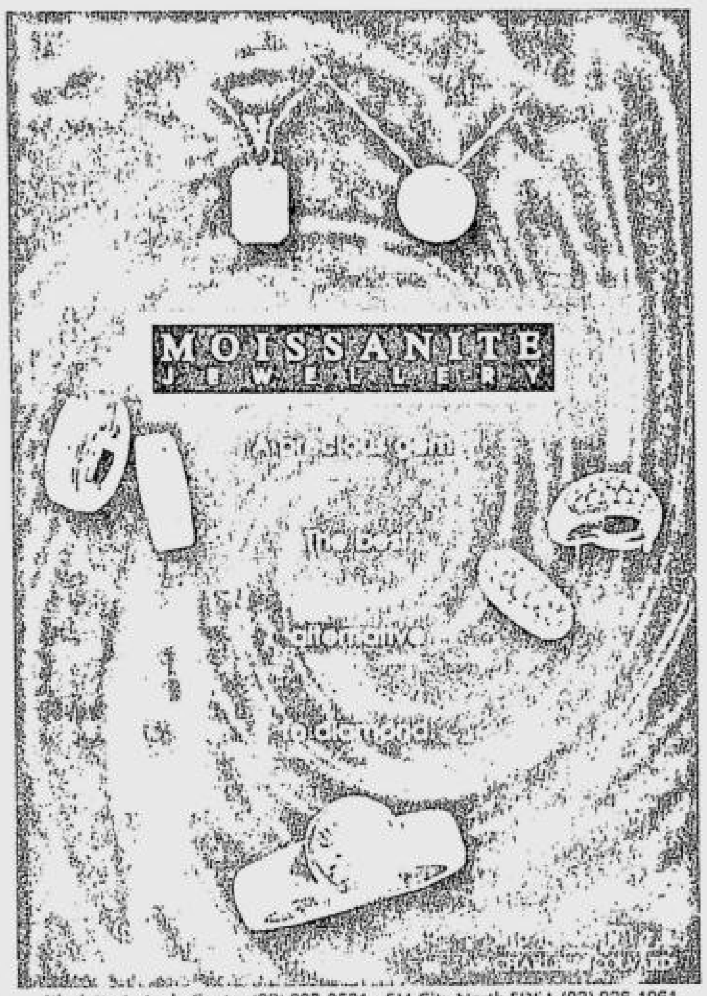

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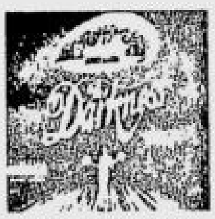

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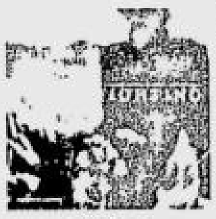

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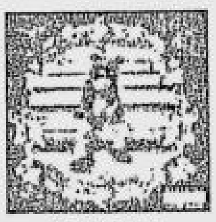

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Out of the classroom, *into the community*

By Melissa Telan
2bU! Correspondent

"WHAT will you do after graduation?" is perhaps the most common question posed to college seniors.

Although replies usually reveal plans of entering the workforce, setting up businesses or going into further studies, you may just hear one or two who are bent on making a difference by becoming NGOs, priests, teachers or entering other service-oriented fields.

Sounds amazing, but is it worth it? Given today's hard times, what motivates these young people on planning to pursue a line of work that is usually difficult, demanding and offers little pay?

2bU! interviews some graduating seniors about their plans and insights regarding entering service-oriented vocations.

For love of country

"I kept thinking about what my ethics teacher, Fr. Que, told our class last semester—our country needs us. I thought that maybe this is the first step for me, my way of helping our country somehow," says Pamela Joy "PJ" Mariano on what inspired her to join the Jesuit Volunteer Philippines (JVP).

PJ, a graduating Philosophy senior, was overjoyed when she was recently accepted, along with 33 others, to this year's batch of JVP.

LUISA Peralta

Her friends had mixed reactions about her plans, though. "Not everyone is comfortable with the idea because it's such a different path to take from college. I got jokes about being a candidate for sainthood, but I guess I have my selfish reasons for joining too," PJ shares.

A socio-pastoral arm of the Jesuits, the JVP sends volunteers to different parts of the country to take on the roles of teachers, campus ministers, parish workers and community organizers for a year, with an option to extend to two years.

A volunteer can be assigned to do a variety of tasks roles that will assist needy local communities-from implementing literacy programs in indigenous communities in Zambales to caring for cancer-stricken kids in Cagayan de Oro.

"I guess what all these varied jobs have in common is that they all contribute, in one way or another, to the promotion and betterment of the lives of the poor and the oppressed," says PJ.

Although PJ is excited about her JVP year, she also feels anxious about it. "I'm scared, no, terrified, at the prospect of beginning my term as a volunteer. I'm plagued by doubts: Will I be accepted by the community? Can I handle homesickness and loneliness? Am I strong enough, physically, emotionally and spiritually?"

She's also gearing herself up for a life outside her comfort zone. "The first three months that we spend in the area, we're not allowed to call home or write letters, because we might spend more time pining for home than getting settled and starting to work. We're also encouraged not to receive money from our parents. We have to try and live a life that is much simpler than we're used to," she says.

But in spite of her worries, a bigger part of her is looking forward to being able to help her fellow Filipinos. "Call me idealistic, but I feel really lucky to have the opportunity to trigger change. A lot of Filipinos need to rediscover hope, that there's hope for our country, and that there are people who care."

PJ Mariano

For more information about the JVP, visit www.jvpfi.org.

For love of God

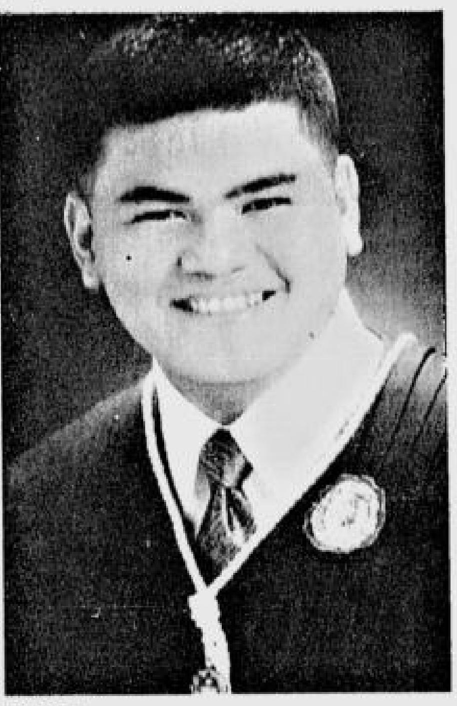
At age 12, Celerino "Rino" Reyes knew he wanted to be a priest. After grade school, he decided to enter the San Jacinto Minor Seminary in Tuguegarao, inspired by his father who was once a seminarian.

His decision surprised his friends. "My friends and classmates were shocked to hear that their notorious grade school bully was aspiring for the priesthood," Rino chuckles. "Well, I guess they eventually understood that with God nothing is impossible-I have changed for the better."

And change he did. Now a graduating pre-divinity student in the Ateneo de Manila University, Rino's years of discernment and living as a seminarian has convinced him that his aspirations to become a priest are genuine. He says, "I want to be a priest because I feel a deep desire to be of service to God and His people."

But he confesses that he sometimes feels tempted to abandon his goal. "When issues- psychological, emotional, academic, vocational- come up and I find myself unable to handle them, I feel like giving up. Fortunately, I feel that I am not alone in bearing these setbacks. Oftentimes I transcend these problems by praying, spending some time in quiet solitude, and talking to people who can understand," he says.

Although his desire to become a priest is firm, he expressed some worries about entering priesthood. "Frankly speaking, with all the issues concerning the church today, all the scandals that pop up from time to time, I feel scared, scared that I might not be able to lead that life which is required of every aspirant to the priesthood-a life of prayer, sanctity, chastity and moral uprightness," he confesses.


RINO Reyes

What motivates these young people to pursue a line of work that is difficult, demanding and offers little pay?

After graduation, don't be surprised to see Rino joining other fresh graduates in search of work. "The seminary encourages us to go out for a while to experience the world. We are given one to three years of regency where we get to choose what work we want to be into... to be exposed to a life without the seminary structures and we literally live on our own without the security provided by the seminary," he explains.

He is prepared to leave the San Jose Seminary in Ateneo, where he has stayed for four years now, once he finds a job. "I have applied to various jobs in the corporate world, government and foreign services. This period of regency is a test for me to see if I'm really called for priesthood."

Then he adds, "While it is true that I do want to be a priest, I remain open to the voice of God, open to where he may lead me. For in the end, what matters most is not my plans or desires but His plan for me, and that is where I want to be."

For love of people

Luisa Peralta, a Development major at the University of Asia and the Pacific, is planning to go back to high school-as a teacher, that is.

"It's always been my dream to teach in Woodrose, where I studied in high school... I was inspired by my teacher who said you should always give something back to that which you hold dearly and which contributed something to who you are right now," says Luisa.

Luisa is not daunted by the tremendous demands of becoming a teacher, such as putting in long hours and earning relatively low pay.

"I have always believed that teaching is a noble job. Even though it has a lot of demands, I know the rewards in teaching—such as molding young minds and perhaps influencing future movers and shakers-makes it worth it," she says.

Similarly, Marcelle Fabie is set on becoming a teacher, but for quite different reasons.

The graduating Ateneo Communications major has recently decided there is nothing else in the world he'd rather do after college than to teach Philosophy, his favorite subject.

His love affair with the subject began during his junior year. "I've always been the kind of person who wants to look into the deeper meaning of things. I think Philosophy heightened this inquisitiveness I have, and after just one semester of it, I was hooked," he says.

He hopes to teach the subject soon in the Ateneo, where undergraduates are required at least 12 units of Philosophy subjects. He has recently taken the entrance exams for Masters in Philosophy in the Ateneo to aid him in his goal.

Marcelle looks forward to the day he can share his passion with others. "It's undeniable that Philosophy has influenced me greatly, and this influence has led me to better things... teaching Philosophy is my way of rendering this service to others, as this is simply the field that makes me grow as a human being," he says.

More than just introducing students to Philosophy, he hopes to make a difference in other's lives through teaching it.

He says, "Maybe I can't lead students to enlightenment in a mere semester, but I know that through teaching them, I'm helping them on the way there. That first step, I believe, is every bit as important as the journey itself, and is every bit important as the last step."

E-mail the author at Melissa@ateneo-celadon.com.

MARCELLE Fabie

Pursuing a medical degree

By Angela V. Ignacio
2bU! Correspondent

I'VE always wanted to become a doctor. Nothing could keep me from pursuing my dream and I would not even consider alternatives.

The shock of graduating from my pre-Medicine course led to doubts. For the first time, I faced the reality that practically all would-be doctors confronted. It made me stop and think.

To breathe or not to breathe?

After a challenging four-year training, I am sure most pre-Med graduates are more than ready to take a break. However, I'm not so sure if summer vacation will suffice for me. I constantly feel like I am going through life holding my breath. With the brutally tough medical training now looming ahead, it seems like I will succumb to asphyxia before I earn my medical degree.

Even as I write this article, I am still engaged in a heated debate with myself. Should I go ahead and take the plunge now, or take a breather first? I know I have it in me to take on the academic challenge of med school, but I am afraid of burnout due to lack of rest and recreation.

So I am contemplating taking a year off to do all the things I want to do but won't be able to once I enter med school--pursue a writing career, take advanced Nippongo classes, hone my rusty art skills, cook like a pro and, most of all... breathe.

I want to be able to focus on my studies and not be bothered by regrets or what-ifs. I could make the most out of my youth and maybe make some money while I'm at it. If I don't make much as a doctor, at least I will have something else to sustain my needs.

Friends say if I enjoy myself too much, I may no longer be as enthusiastic about going to med school as I used to be. But the Christian in me would say, if it really is my calling, then I will become a doctor. Let God's will be done.

No money in Medicine

On the other hand, there is one particularly bitter pill that I, and most pre-med grads, find difficult to swallow. Most doctors tell me: "There is no money in Medicine." Contrary to popular belief, only a handful of doctors make more than enough. Other doctors have to explore other options, including taking up Nursing.

The article "Doctors Work Abroad as Nurses" by Dr. Patricia Gatbonton discusses the so-called a doctor-nurse phenomenon. Reasons for shifting professions include financial problems, the national situation ("If FPJ wins, I'm outta here," is often heard), and, well... financial problems.

Nurses abroad reportedly earn almost five times as much as doctors here.

The thought of taking up nursing after pre-med or med school did not cross my mind until recently when some classmates revealed plans to enroll in Nursing instead of going to med school as they originally planned.

But I am intent on nailing that medical degree despite my reservations; I just have to figure out when to start.

A matter of pacing

Indecisiveness is common among fresh graduates. I am quite sure I am not the only one with this kind of problem. The issue is not whether to take up Medicine or not; it's all a matter of pacing. Whether I decide to stop and smell the roses first, or wake up and smell the formalin now, one thing remains: I still want to be a doctor. Never mind that it is not as well-paying as it used to be, or that current circumstances discourage even the most eager pre-Med from going on to medical school.

I remember I was asked during an admissions interview --- rank the following in order of priority: money, prestige and service. I put service first because that was what I believed doctors offered; money second because it was necessary for survival (unfortunately so); and prestige last because I considered it an added privilege that came with serving others the best way a doctor can.

I don't care if I sound holier-than-thou; that was the truth, and still is. Maybe I'll consider nursing or other health care-related professions in a few years. Maybe I won't. Who knows? As Dr. Gatbonton mentioned in her article, there is honor and calling in both professions--nursing and medicine. Money shouldn't drive our career decisions, no matter how much of a necessity it is. In any case, the best reward for me would be that sense of fulfillment that stems from knowing that my patient is getting better because of me. It gives me a warm feeling inside just thinking about it.

In a few hours, I will have to make the most crucial choice in my young adult life. But whether I take the plunge now or next year, what matters is that I am happy with my decision, and that I will have no regrets. Here's to the next step, wherever it will lead me.

E-mail the author at aoshi_no_miko@hotmail.com

A budding journalist's encounters with Diane Sawyer and Barbara Walters

From page E1

ine that the most trusted names in news worked there.

Although my first two assignments were major hour-long stories—one on Private Jessica Lynch, the American soldier who was captured in Iraq, and another on the "Lord of the Rings" movies—I did not bump into the network's stars.

Seeing Sawyer

One day on my way to my floor, I followed a woman to one of the elevators. Only when we were inside did I realize who she was. Diane Sawyer was carrying a box with bags piled on top of it. She was dressed casually in a buttoned-down shirt and jeans, and I remembered that she must have just finished hosting "Good Morning America." (I suppose it feels good to change into comfortable clothes after hosting.)

What should I say to her? Should I introduce myself? Should I tell her I was working on her Jessica Lynch story?

I finally thought of something appropriate. "Do you need any help?"

She laughed, peered at me over her cargo and said, "Well, could you press number 10 for me? Thanks."

I obliged and disembarked on floor four. My stomach was in knots and I scurried to my cubicle to gather my thoughts.

A few days later came the opportunity to meet the First Lady of Television Hosting. Barbara Walters was giving a seminar to 20 or so interns, assigned to different departments of ABC News. She looked much younger in person, and we found ourselves staring at the tiny woman who had interviewed political leaders and celebrities, and who had proven to the old boys' club that women could ask tough questions and do damn good stories.

She spent half an hour talking about her career, after which we were invited to ask questions. A few interns asked the usual—her favorite interview, what it was like being the only female journalist early in her career.

THE AUTHOR with "Good Morning America" host Diane Sawyer

I put up my hand. "What do you think about the criticism that news is now a combination of entertainment and news? That it is more 'info-tainment' than hard news?" I asked.

Walters broke into another talk about the "good ol' days," when ratings did not matter much and she could spend an hour talking to heads of state. She said she actually does not like interviewing celebrities anymore because it means asking the same questions and getting the same answers.

"I'm not sure how much longer I want to continue doing this," she concluded, apparently unhappy that news organizations were headed in the same direction as entertainment-focused shows. Not long after, she announced she would be leaving "20/20" in the fall. I was not surprised.

Toward the end, the interns were allowed to tour the Times Square studios. Inside we were led to the central nervous system of ABC's flagship newsmagazines, the control room. John Stossel, Walter's co-anchor, quickly downed a slice of pizza at the back of the room before picking up the latest version of his script from the printer and heading downstairs to the studio. (The anchors tape their parts of the script the night before the show airs.)

We went in small groups to the studio. It was very dark, with black floors and the only real light being the spotlights on John. From where I was standing, I could see past John the large floor-to-ceiling windows, where passersby on Times Square were pressed against the windows, waving and pointing.

It felt strange watching live a scene I had seen many times on television.

With Theron

On my last day at ABC News, I assisted at a shoot with Diane Sawyer and Charlize Theron at the Waldorf Astoria. Diane was stylish in red pants, high heels and a cream-colored sweater. Svelte and willowy, she had presence.

Charlize, about six foot tall, with bright gray-green eyes, was stunning. In her Ugg boots and undone hair, she had everyone staring at her. But the producer overheard her whispering to her assistants, "Diane's so beautiful!"

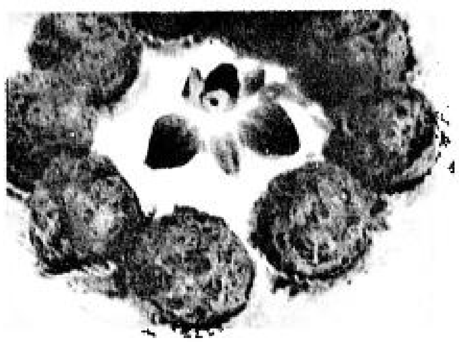
The interview lasted an hour and I felt incredibly lucky to have witnessed it. I was able to study Diane's technique and learn first-hand how she would ask the tough questions while keeping her subject's trust. I was also impressed with Charlize.

I was not a fan, but my opinion of Charlize changed completely during that hour. She was articulate and composed. Even when Diane was asking her about her troubled family life, Charlize would not become upset. She said that she had moved on in her life and that she had a lot to be happy about now. It was a very mature, graceful response. But she also had us kibitzers laughing as she joked about her wish to do comedy.

After the interview, Diane took Charlize aside to compliment her. Charlize, for her part, told Diane that her mother was a huge fan of hers and that she could not believe she had actually met her.

I felt the same way, so before she left, I asked Charlize if I could have my picture taken with her. She obliged, and we put our arms around each other.

What a way to end my internship at ABC News! For this Filipino-Canadian, it was almost an American dream come true.



TARO Puff

CRISPY Shredded Beef with Hot and Sour Sauce

CHINESE Pan Cake with Lotus Filling

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CONGRATULATIONS, graduate. After all that hard work, we think you deserve a treat. Just tell us about your most memorable graduation moment and we'll give you and three of your loved ones the chance to enjoy Island Café's lunch or dinner buffet. Feast on the hot and cold appetizers, salads, breads and cheese, wide variety of main dishes, delightful temptations of the action and carving stations and sinful desserts.

Congratulations

And we also have a gift for you to take home—Chocolate Tiramisu Gateua, Makati Shangri-La's graduation cake. This cake, from Shangri-La's Gourmet Corner, is a rich chocolate mousse that has tiramisu inside; it is sprayed with Belgian Chocolate and garnished with a toque and a graduation certificate.

E-mail us about your favorite graduation moment. Send your entries to contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph along with your name, age, address, school, contact information and graduation picture.

Apart from our contest, Makati Shangri-La has other treats in store for graduates. Shang Palace's Chef Tsang has prepared a special graduation feast which will be served until April 15. Conway's presents graduates with a complimentary pitcher of margarita for a party of 10. And if a graduate dines at the Shang Palace, Inagiku, Red or Island Café with four other people, the graduate gets to eat for free—provided that he or she brings the diploma or any other proof of graduation.

Feast . . .

From page E4

munching on greens. The Braised Minced Dried Octopus was also a dish to be savored.

We ended our meal with Chilled Mango Sago, which is always a delight, and Chinese Pan Cake with Lotus Filling, which was like a less sweet version of Beaver Tails.

The meal was more than just that. It was an adventure. As we enjoyed the different dishes, Shang Palace's operations manager Saphirra Chua regaled us with stories about China and its cuisine. We learned quite a number of things during our luncheon: the use of wider ends of chopsticks (to serve your guests), why the Chinese use porcelain (it absorbs heat), the different kinds of dimsum, the history of Chinese food...

It was like a crash course, really.

There was no test at the end of it; there was only dessert.

But even if there was, I think we would all have passed.

Shang Palace is at the second floor of the Makati Shangri-La Hotel, Ayala Avenue corner Makati Avenue. Reservations are recommended.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph.

Graduation barkada blowout!

YOU did it!

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We have a perfect day planned for you and your four other friends who just graduated.

Let us take you to SM Megamall. We'll start your adventure with some shopping—actually, a lot of shopping. Then, while wearing your new finds, we'll let you sit back and enjoy a movie of your choice.

After the credits roll, you and your friends can ice skate and play bowling and billiards.

When you're all tired, we'll make your palate happy—by asking one of the mall's restaurants to prepare a sumptuous dinner for you.

To top it all, after you've enjoyed the blowout, we will feature your *barkada* in the pages of 2bU!

If you and four friends graduated from high school or college this month, you can join the Graduation Barkada Blowout. Just tell us about your *barkada*, tell us about each individual, what brought you together, what you like doing together, and what your most memorable moments are. Let us take a peek into your world.

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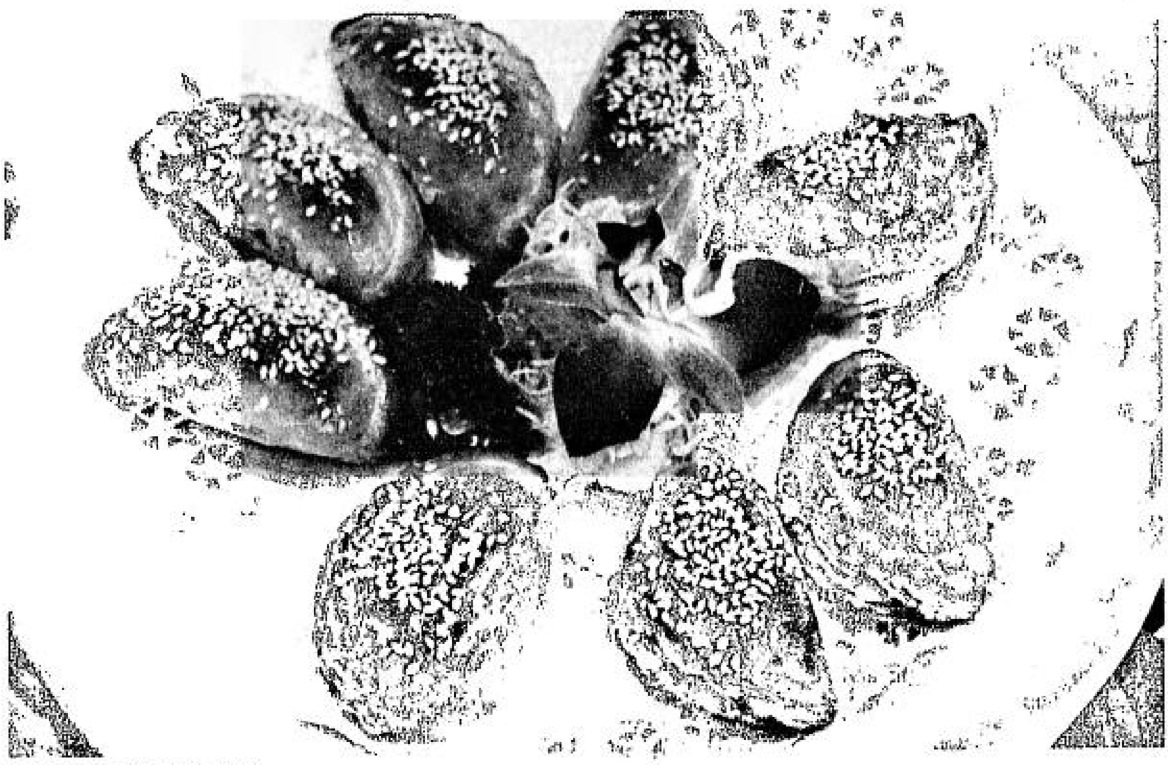
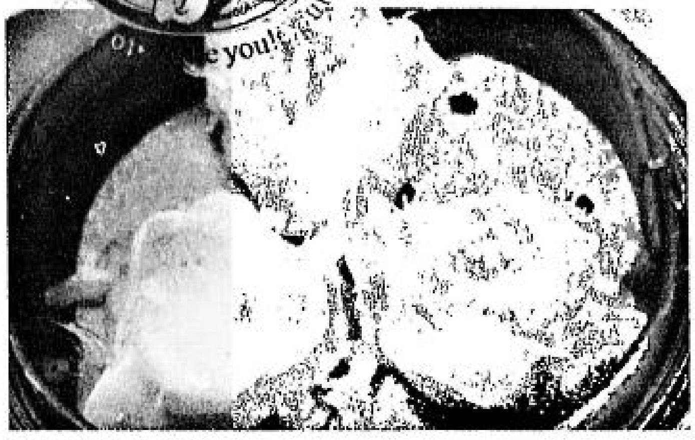
Per DTI-NCR Permit no 0687, series of 2004



BARBECUE Pork Pastry



SHARK'S Fin Dumpling

Not just
a meal,
but also
a crash
course
on Chinese
culture—
and we all
graduated!

Feast fit for graduates

Text by Pam Pastor
Photos by Randy Hormillosa

NO, we were not graduating, but the feast that Makati Shangri-La's Shang Palace prepared for us almost made us feel like we were.

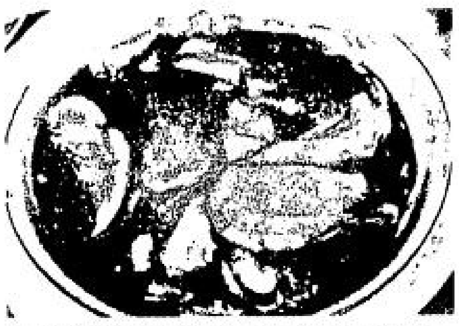
The meal started with Crystal Ball Dumplings. Stuffed with plump and juicy prawns, these little balls of wonder were a delight. Next came the unforgettable Barbecue Pork Pastry. The pastry was crisp and flaky and contrasted perfectly with the sweet and tender pork filling. This dish was so good that we had to ask for seconds. And barely a week later, I made a trip back to Shangri-La and placed another order to go so I could share it with my loved one.

The Shark's Fin Dumpling was a real treat. It was tasty and the ingredients were rich—a far cry from your typical lumpy dumpling. The Vegetable Roll and the Taro Puff were heavenly—excellent examples of how well the Chinese can play with flavors.

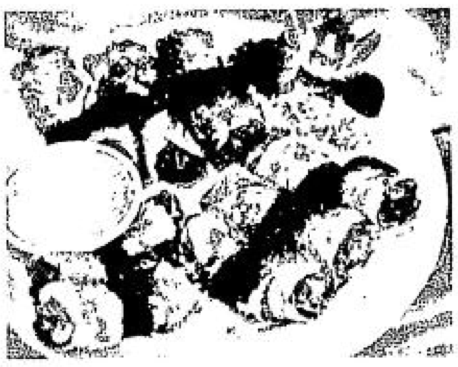
After the dimsum discoveries, we dug into the main dishes. The Braised Lingzhi Mushroom in Clam Sauce was a discovery. The mushroom's taste and texture can almost fool you into believing that you were feasting on abalone. The Crispy Shredded Beef with Hot and Sour Sauce was a flavorful experience— even those of us who are averse to spicy food gave this dish a try and loved it. The Stewed Pork Knuckles with Ground Nuts in Nam Yee Sauce was like an upgraded version of your household *pata tim*; its flavors were subtle.

The Sauteed Asparagus with Minced Shrimps served in Lettuce was my favorite next to the Barbecue Pork Pastry. This is a good way to convince vegetable-hating people to start

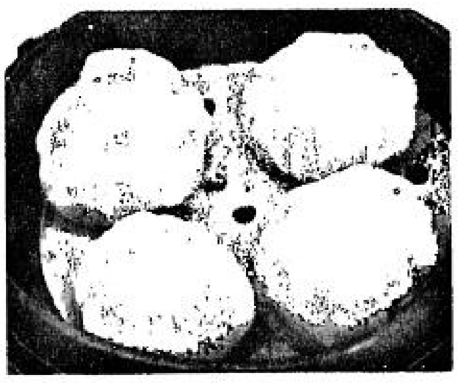
FEAST/ E3



BRAISED Lingzhi Mushroom in Clam Sauce

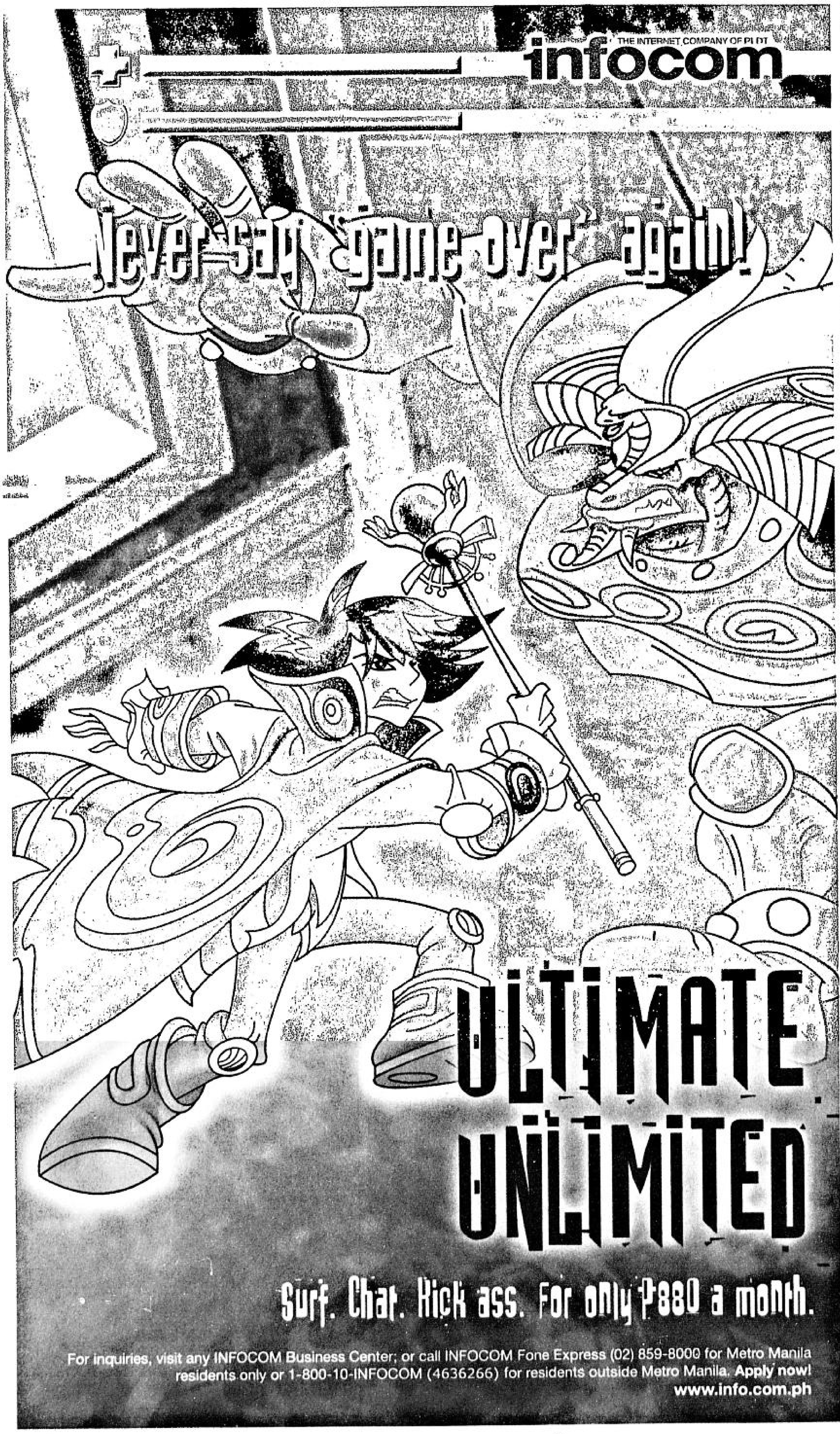


VEGETABLE Roll



CRYSTAL Ball Dumplings

SAUTEED Asparagus with Minced Shrimps served in Lettuce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Driving Ms Kyla

The country's new R&B princess is just an ordinary girl at heart

Text by Gary Mercado
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Randy Hormillosa

YOUNG, beautiful, talented, and with enough presence and charisma to power up the city, she was the perfect subject for an interview while test-driving the new Chevy Aveo.

Kyla, the new pop superstar of "Hanggang Ngayon" and "Because of You" fame, turned out to be quite a normal person.

Band member at 14

The second to the youngest of four kids, her older brother was the original singer in the family. After graduating from San Sebastian High School, she took up mass communications at the Philippine Christian University.

She would have been a teacher or a vocal coach if she weren't a singer.

At age 14, she begged her parents to let her join a band, but they accompanied her to gigs at the Boulevardier, Intercon Hotel. "I guess *masyado lang nag-iingat yung* dad *ko... Natatakot sila para sa akin...Pero* okay *din yan, malalaman ko din yan siguro pag naging* parent *na rin ako*," she said.

Not her usual self

She was a little uncomfortable during the pictorial wearing the outlandish wigs that needed a hundred hairpins to keep in place and took 10 minutes to remove. Though she looked good in a mini skirt, she felt awkward. She explained, "Usually I wear jeans, cargo pants... (but) I want to try different things."

She said being a singer was tough but challenging. "*Kasi merong mga bagay na gustong ipagawa sa iyo at nacha*-challenge *kang gawin. Nakakapunta rin ako sa mga* parties, *pero* mostly *yung mga sa* celebrities *din. Pang* PR."

As for *barkada*, she said her friends were also working now. "*Yung gimik ko, yung* work *na*." "*Pero* okay *lang naman kasi nage*-enjoy *ako*," she continued. "*Ito na ata ang pinakamadaling* job *kasi para sa akin hindi* job. *Gusto ko yung ginagawa ko e, masaya ako sa ginagawa ko. Kumakanta ako*, privileged *ako na mag*-endorse (B.U.M Equipment's women's line, B.U.M.G.)."

Singing the same tune

She is pleased when the audience is excit-

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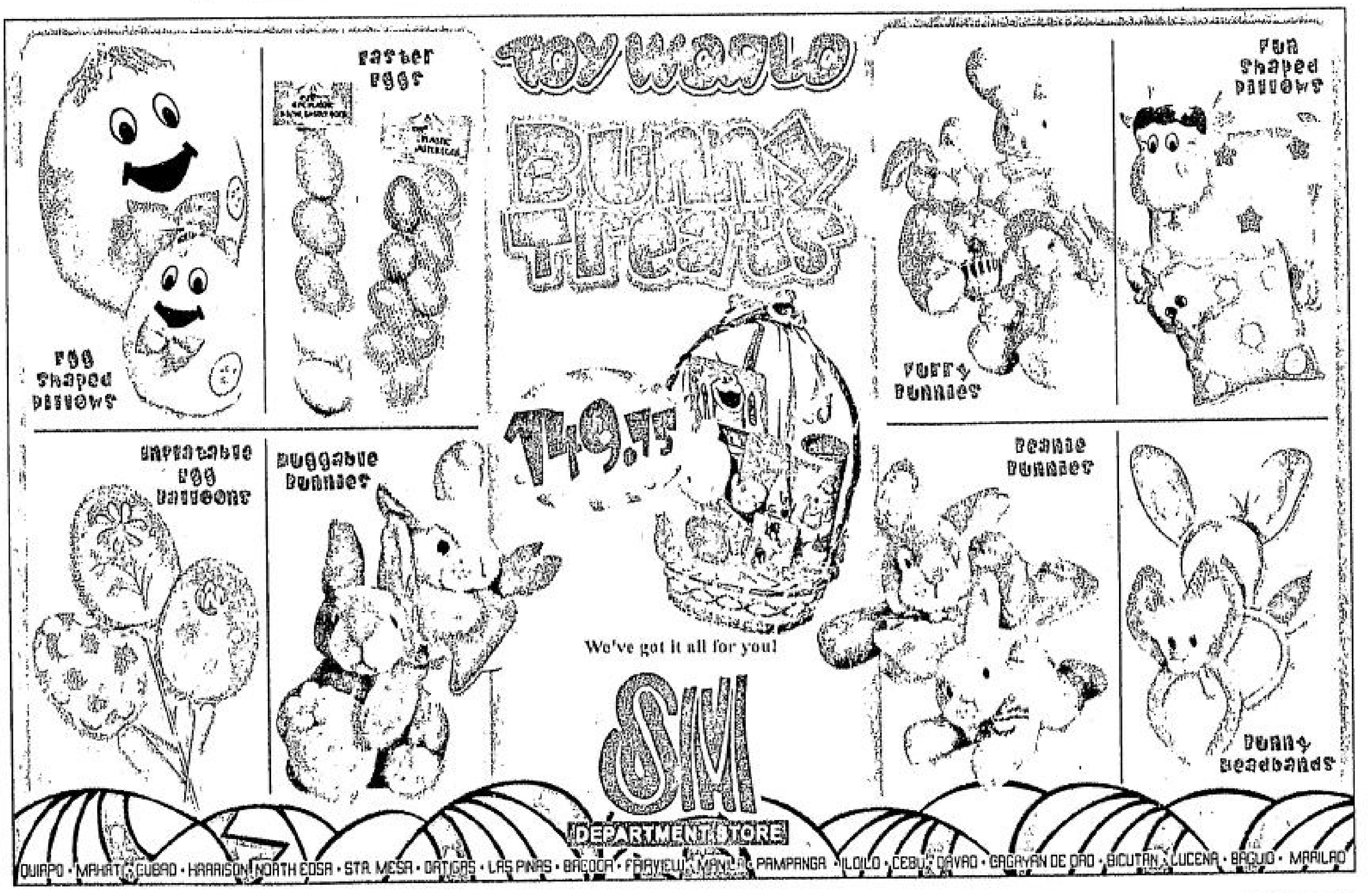

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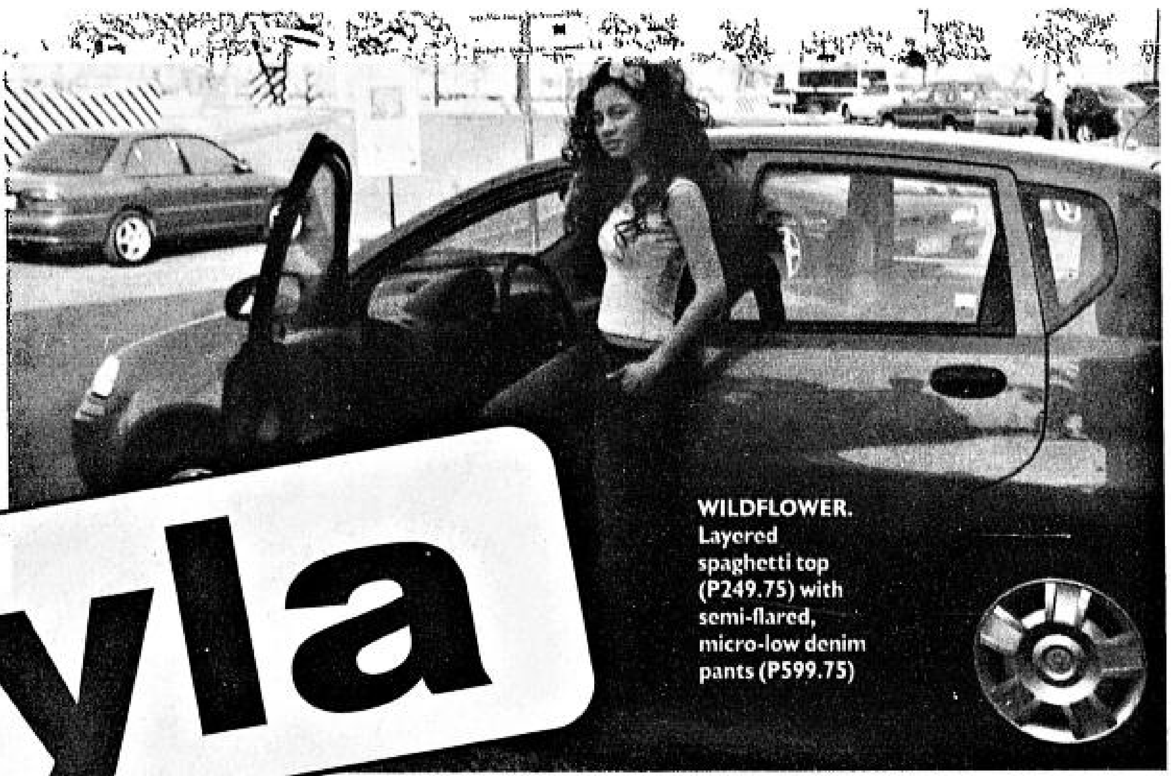
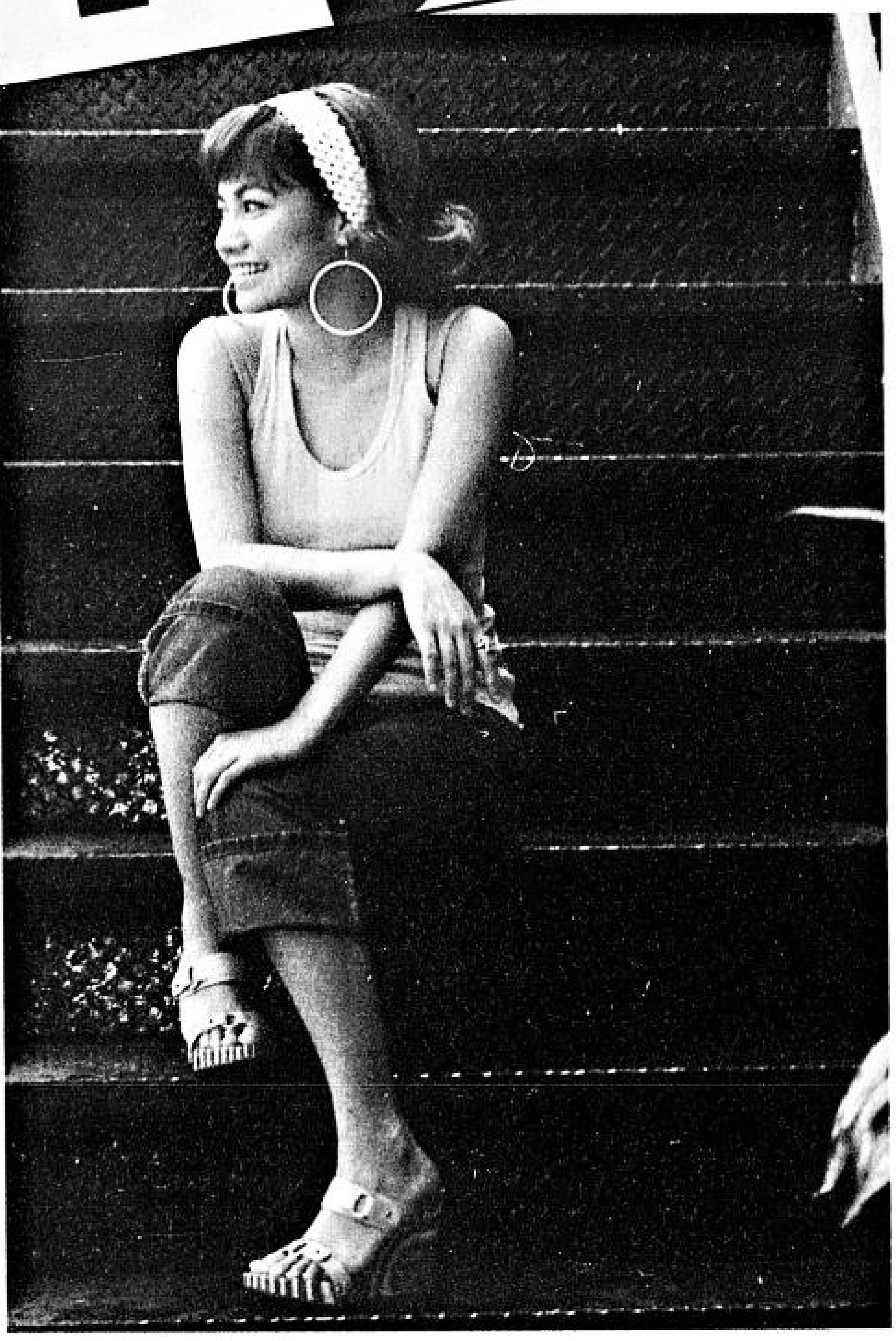
CRUISIN. The author with Kyla



WILDFLOWER. Layered spaghetti top (P249.75) with semi-flared, micro-low denim pants (P599.75)

Driving Ms Kyla

She is pleased when the audience is excited, even if she's sung a song a hundred times



IN HER ELEMENT. Basic tank top (P229.75), stretch racer-back tank top (P279.75), semi-flared, micro-low denim capri (P549.75)

From page F1

ed, even if she's sung a song a hundred times. "*Nagiging* exciting *ang* song, *depende sa paggre*-greet *ng* audience *sa yo. Meron kasing* audiences that don't react, *kahit sobrang* popular *na yung* song, *kahit lumalabas na yung ugat mo sa leeg, walang* reaction. *Pero naman* it gets exciting when they sing along with you, *pag ganado sila.*"

She admitted that sometimes it got tiring to sing the same song over and over again. "*Minsan* I have three shows in a day, and I have to sing 'Because of You' three times every day! *Pero* okay *lang*.... I've been singing '*Hanggang Ngayon*' for two years every day, three times a day. *Basta masaya yung* audience."

Dreadful 25

The 23-year-old singer (her birthday is Jan. 5) said her audience consisted mostly of people younger than her. She admitted that she was scared by the thought of turning 25, although she did not know why, saying, "...*ayoko nung ganong* age *e, parang nag* e-enjoy *kasi ako at this* age *e*!"

Role model

"Years from now *siyempre gusto ko parang kay* Regine (Velasquez). *Matagal na siya sa* business *na to, kaya pa rin niyang* i-reinvent ang *sarili niya*." Has she earned respect? "*Siguro*, from some. (But) *parang ang dami ko pang dapat pagdaanan, malaman at matutunan.*"

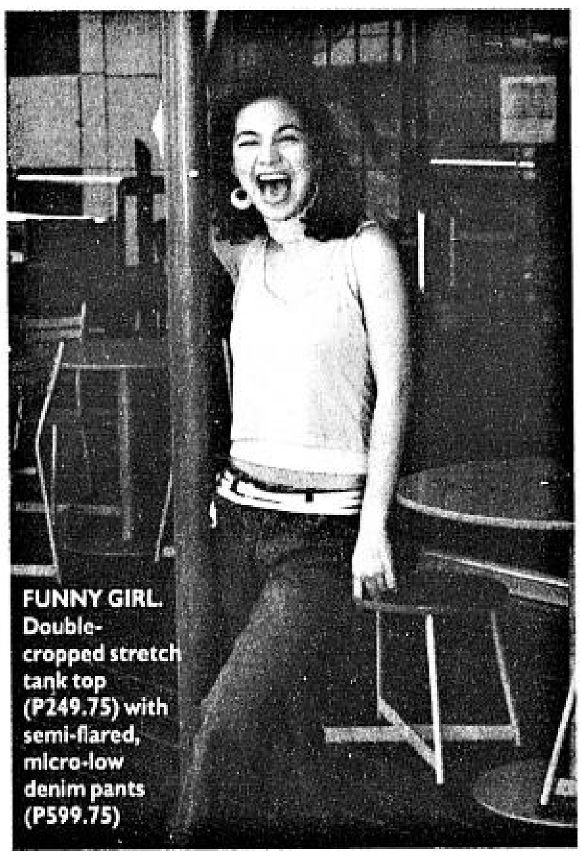
As for critics: "My fourth album is coming out (tentatively) April. *Marami pang nagcri*-criticize, *maraming nagdo*-doubt," including some media people and even artists. *Pero siyempre kanya-kanyang* opinion *din yan e.* Very subjective."

Her preference

Asked what kind of songs she really liked, she replied by telling how she sang Ella Fitzgerald's "How High the Moon" at a recent jazz event. Five of the song's seven minutes were "scatting" or pure jazz vocal improvisation.

Apparently, the audience appreciated it. "*May mga tumayo naman*. Especially those who understood that music," she beamed.

She said Janno Gibbs asked her to sing the song that he knew she liked.



FUNNY GIRL. Double-cropped stretch tank top (P249.75) with semi-flared, micro-low denim pants (P599.75)

Other soul and R&B (rhythm and blues) singers she favors are Jennifer Holiday, Sarah Vaughn, Regina Bell (she reminds her of "Ate" Jaya). She said her dad exposed her to that music, and Lauryn Hill is a more recent favorite. Although not many people appreciate jazz, she finds performing the music fulfilling.

She has tried her hand at song-writing but, at the moment at least, cannot maintain the focus she thinks the task needs.

Taking a pit stop at Jollibee Fort, she gamely signed autographs on receipts.

She talked about Joss Stone, Madonna's timeless style, Alicia Key's lyrics and others as the Chevy made its way to where her associates were waiting for her.

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She wants to forget her ex-boyfriend and move on

Niño Mark Sablan & September Mabino

DEAR Mark and Sep,

I'm currently in a post-breakup stage where everything is bleak and depressing. I have ended everything with my boyfriend last Oct. 6 because of another woman. It devastated me so much that I even considered hurting myself. You see, we've been together for 1 year and 8 months and in my 23 years of existence, this is the first time I have ever been in love. I fell so hard for him that I even decided that he's going to be my partner for life. I never thought that he would do such a thing because he had been a very good and loving partner.

The past weeks had been a struggle for me to forget him. I busied myself with a lot of things but he keeps on entering my mind and when he does, I always hold back my tears to no avail.

Other than busying myself, dating other men and constantly praying, what should I do to forget him?

MILLIE

The thing is that the three coping mechanisms you mentioned are the best ones to do when one wants to move on. Busying yourself directs your precious time and energy into hopefully more productive endeavors. Dating other men speeds up your chances of getting a hopefully better Romeo who can make you totally forget the jerk. And constant praying helps too, with God as the ultimate shock absorber who just might give you what you're asking for.

Passionately and honestly, enumerate that demon's worst traits, with unfaithful and sexually promiscuous occupying the top two spots. Explode into a bonfire with all the fury inside you. Torture him inside the movie screen of your mind. Mutter obscenities to air imagining he's that ugly lamppost over there. Turn into incredible Pacquiao and go on a punching spree thinking of your less fave stuffed toy as your ex.

And then forgive him. Raise your chin and radiate holiness. Feel that halo. Understand how moronic he had been to commit such a horrible undertaking. Smile a subtle one upon the thought of how Neanderthal he is and how extremely evolved a being you are. My god, you're a goddess! You're the bomb. Your brain cells are worthy of only the best thoughts so trash any scene that involves that evil dog. Once you understand how unworthy that fungus is of even one of your seconds, then you'll automatically and naturally move on to much better things and people.

MARK

You don't know how refreshing it is to find someone who is brave enough to face the truth and to admit that while they may seem fine, on a deeper level, they truly aren't.

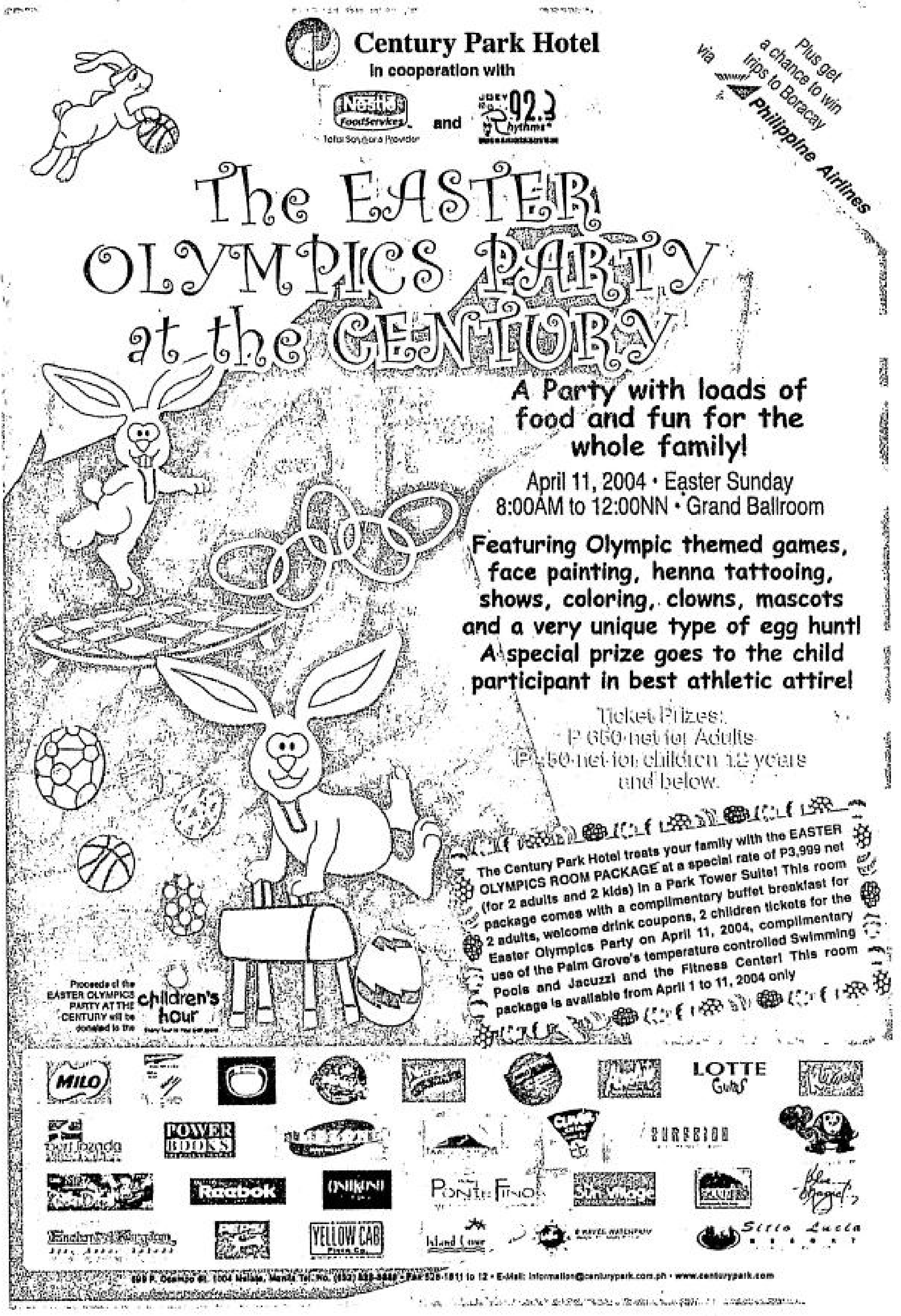
From what you've told me, you seem to be doing what any sensible girl with a healthy amount of self-respect would do—first and foremost, accept that a relationship is over and that along with it, the boy you loved is no longer yours. Second, instead of letting work slide, try to find solace in it and, in the process, give yourself the opportunity to improve your career. Third, you meet new people, perhaps boys who are nicer and more well-mannered than that jerk you used to call your boyfriend. And then there is your calling on some higher power to help you get over this bad experience. All four steps are advisable methods on recovering from a relationship that has gone sour.

If you are troubled by the crying spells that you have every once in a while, then you have to know that they happen because you're human. A smart girl, granted, but still human. Allow yourself to wallow in the pain of your first heartbreak, as purging out all the bad emotional stuff is part of the healing process. Just don't overdo the self-pity bit because that might do you in and make you throw all your good resolutions out the window. But given your sensible perspective, I don't think you have to worry about that.

Just keep on what you've been doing. Continue focusing on work, continue meeting new people and most important, continue being willing to come out of this slump as a better, wiser person. Because I have to tell you, in situations like these, self-motivation is already half of the battle.

SEPTEMBER

E-mail the writers at markandsep@yahoo.com. Chatroom is inviting letter senders to indicate if they want their e-mail address printed so wannabe Mark and Seps out there can get in touch with problematic readers and send in their comments and advice.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A Party with loads of food and fun for the whole family!

April 11, 2004 • Easter Sunday
8:00AM to 12:00NN • Grand Ballroom

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Ticket Prizes:
P 650 net for Adults
P[illegible]50 net for children 12 years and below.

The Century Park Hotel treats your family with the EASTER OLYMPICS ROOM PACKAGE at a special rate of P3,999 net (for 2 adults and 2 kids) in a Park Tower Suite! This room package comes with a complimentary buffet breakfast for 2 adults, welcome drink coupons, 2 children tickets for the Easter Olympics Party on April 11, 2004, complimentary use of the Palm Grove's temperature controlled Swimming Pools and Jacuzzi and the Fitness Center! This room package is available from April 1 to 11, 2004 only

Proceeds of the EASTER OLYMPICS PARTY AT THE CENTURY will be donated to the children's hour

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2nd Prize: Star Cruise for 4 to Singapore • 3rd Prize: Vespa Scooter

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2363 Globe/Touch Mobile

GET A CHANCE TO WIN WEEKLY PRIZES,
A total of 25 i-Pods & 25 Mountain Bikes to be given away!

SNICKERS MAD SUMMER PROMO

PROMO MECHANICS:
- Buy specially marked Snickers® Chocolates: Snickers® Singles; Snickers® 6-packs, Snickers® Fun Size, Snickers® King Size with a Snickers® Mad Summer sticker and a raffle code from participating supermarkets and establishments.
- To join the promo, register by sending SNK REG <space> the raffle code/full name/age/complete address and send it to these access numbers:
  2600 for Smart, Talk 'n Text and Addict Mobile Subscribers
  2363 for Globe and Touch Mobile subscribers
  Example: SNK REG HNY123456/John Reyes/23/25 Rizal St., Bgy. Silangan, Makati City
- Once a mobile number is registered, succeeding raffle codes from the same mobile number should be sent by texting SNK <space> raffle code to the appropriate service numbers.
  Example: SNK <space> HNK123456
- Smart, Talk 'n Text, Addict Mobile and Globe prepaid subscribers will be charged P2.50 per text sent. Globe post paid will be charged P2.00.
- Promo will run from March 22 to June 6, 2004.

PRIZES
- Total Weekly Prizes: 25 Apple i-Pods with 15 GB memory & 25 Mountain Bikes.
- Total Grand Prizes:
  First : Mitsubishi Outlander
  Second : Star Cruise for 4 to Singapore, including roundtrip airfare, accommodation 4 days/3 nights, meals
  Third : Vespa Scooter, Automatic
- All entries are cumulative. Non-winning entries still qualify for the succeeding weekly and grand draws. The more entries you send, the more chances of winning.
- Participants can win only one weekly and one grand prize. Weekly electronic draws will be held every Monday, 4:00pm beginning April 5, 12, 19, 26, May 3, 10, 17, 24, May 31 and last weekly and grand draw is on June 7. Draws will be held in the presence of representatives from MFPI, TMS and BFAD.

  Weekly cut off of entries will be every Friday, 11:59pm except for the last draw, where cut off will be Sunday, June 6, last day of promotion.
- Draws will be held at Xurpas office, Unit 706 Windsor Towers, Legaspi Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City.
- Probable winners will be sent notice by registered mail informing them about a verification procedure before declaration of winner.
- Snickers® wrapper/sticker with the winning entry must be sent to Tuchak Marketing Services, 55 West Capitol Drive, Barangay Kapitolyo, Pasig City, via LBC FREE of charge for verification.
- Promo sticker must remain intact and in good condition together with the Snickers® wrapper (proof of purchase). All damaged, altered, tampered stickers will be disqualified and rendered invalid.
- Verification will be enforced to assure validity and authenticity of the promo sticker and wrappers. Representatives from MFPI, TMS and BFAD will conduct verification.
- Verified winners will be sent registered mail declaring their entry and proof of purchase valid and informing them where and how to claim their prize.
- Prizes may be claimed at Tuchak Marketing Services, 55 West Capitol Drive, Barangay Kapitolyo, Pasig City or shipped to the winners at their cost. MFPI or TMS, however, will not be held responsible for loss or damages.
- Prizes must be claimed within (60)sixty days after verification. Unclaimed prizes will be forfeited in favor of Master Foods Philippines, Inc.
- Prizes are not transferable and not convertible to cash.
- Weekly prizes are tax paid. The 20% prize tax for grand prizes will be shouldered by the winner, including additional incidental taxes that may be imposed.
- Winners of vehicles will take care of additional expenses covering registration and insurance.
- All trips include accommodation and meals; winners should, however, provide their own pocket money, travel documents like passports, visas and travel taxes.
- Winners must also be willing to be photographed for press releases and for winners' ad announcing names of all winners to be issued after promo duration.
- Employees of Master Foods Philippines, Inc., all their agencies, suppliers, partners and sponsors, including their relatives up to second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promotion.

Grand prize winners will shoulder 20% prize tax. Weekly prizes are tax paid.
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DOH BFAD No. 0231 Series of 2004

More give less take

MOODS ARE warming with the weather. Colours are getting bright as the layers are getting lighter. For coast or city, slouch or style, for boy or girl-but most of all, for your pleasure - Lee delivers Spring/Summer 2004. Your no-nonsense answer to confidence this season.

T's are back-bigger and badder than ever before. Top-up your collection with one or more of Lee's new graphic prints T's
Why not mix-it -up a litt
with a patchwork T,or a
deconstructed shirt, pe
fect for a party, picnic o
punch-up. If punk-fuelle
rebellion is more your th
try a bleach streak applic

Protect yourself in de
today's answer to arme
Lads take your pick
season from snow
wash, grey wash,
tik blue and dirty
fatigue. While yo
lasses will look p
lished in this se
son's stovepipe
and minis in m
vintage, sunbl
ach and vintage
splatter washes

Be the raciest
girl 'round in a
pair of butterc
shorts with patc
pockets but if tha
not your thing, capr
and resort style pant

with a military influence are back to keep you company this season. It all depends if your ticket is for Rome, or Rio.

Romance can take a back-seat as we see the ladies assert their sexual power in a biker jacket teamed with a micro, yet manage-
a mini or pair of
led panel hip-
ters. Why

not funk it up with the fluoro print T, but if that doesn't work , dazzle them in a tie-dye glitter T.

Fact: Spring/Summer is the time you are most likely to get luck
so why not increase your
chances with Lee.

The new limited
styles are availa
instore include
Sparkskill- a s

"The Lee collection has grown stronger each season, combining Lee's traditional workwear heritage with new, contemporary styles. So it seemed an obvious
ove for Lee to open a
store to showcase
ge of product a
nonstrate Lee's
tion to denim
aby Street is

customers will come across Lee japanese Originals - exact replicas of how jeans were made back in late nineteenth century. Lee Originals are

jacket and bib overall
ere designed for those
dworking railroaders.
the ground floor is the
llection supporting the
ebirth, styles such as
the new low waist
or men and Nash
waisted loose fit.

Lee jeans ta
a walk to Car
naby Street
London with
first store

Iconic denim brand L
to open its first ever st
London. With two floor
cutting edge Lee styles
denim lovers will be ab
to get the full Lee exper
ience under one roof.

The flagship store is
situated in Carnaby Str
an increasingly hip tast
mecca for style brands
Illustrating the brands h
ritage since 1889 and its
dedication to iconic den
styles, the store houses
Lee's Originals, 101s,
Union Alls and seasona
collections.

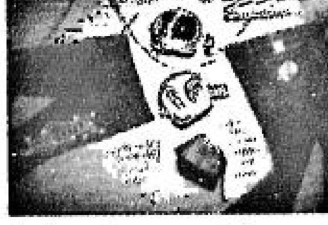
The cor

The store
London's most
design and commu
agencies, with grea
in youth fashion re
ing.

The store will reflec
philosophy of mixing a
influences with urban c
rary looks. A mixture o
crete and will be used
in the store, alongside
slate, zinc and untreate
Respecting the original
design of the building,
the store will exp
se the natural fin
of the ceiling and
an industrial feel.

The Lee c

Walking into the s
denim atticionados w
encounter the 101 ra
the ultimate five poc
jean. 101z zip fly an
101b buttonfly carri
authentic details such



the donut buttons and the canvas patch. The range is complimented by the 101j Storm rider jacket with button adjusters and zigzag stitching down the front of the jacket.

Union Alls are perfect illustration of how Lee looks to its 100

traditional work
wear, reinvented into
a modern
ground floor is
collection supporting the black rebirth, styles such as Roscoe, the new low waist bootcut style for men and Nash the low waisted loose fit. To supplement the rebirth of the black denim is the rock n roll buddy Lee t, traditional rider jacket and slim fitting denim shirts.

Moving down into the basement, customers will come across Lee japanese Originals exact replicas of how jeans were made back in the late nineteenth century. Lee Originals are unique and timeless, reflecting the standards of quality and strength as set out by Henry David Lee more than a hundred years ago.

For women, new limited edition styles available instore extra

skirt.
lazy 'S' icon
products, symbolizing the
of a pair of long-horns, making them feminine and sexy. To wrap up against the November chill when stepping back outside, Lee also has the Lazee jacket, with slanting fastening, detachable faux fur collar and satin red lining.

A devotion to blue is created

succesful Leola-slim
t, low -waist boot
t jean is avail-
. style Maddox,
superlow waist
son available in
xtra comfortable
nged with a selection
printed designs and sketches.

Lee
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FROM THE PAST
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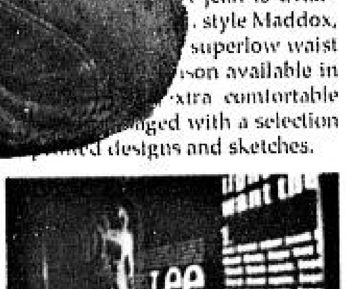

n Alls a perfect
stration how Lee
year heritage and
s inspiration from
tional hardwearing
workwear, reinvented
into a modern context.
showcasing the loco
jacket and bib overall
ich were designed for
hose hardworking railroaders.
o on the ground floor
collection supporting
he black rebirth, styles
ew waist bootcut style
for men and Nash the
e waisted loose fit. To
pplement the rebirth of
black denim is the rock
n roll'buddy lee t, traditional rider jacket and
m fitting denim shirt

e New Lee
enim store
nila rocks
vant-garde
design

age origami inspired
, camouflage print
colorful paper lams,
essed painted wood
chrome metal details.
or is a mishmash of
d style that showcase
ne Lee's traditional
heritage with the
ontemporary look of

llection inspired

mini polo. Even
getting in.
p in
their
p up
aters.
aise for
Denim
rom stiff,
denim to tints and
fine. Being a season of decadent classics, as well as modern innovation, high quality fabric is pounded with stones and either bleached, busted or enzymed. An effect of being slashed, blasted, brushed, tinted or whiskered is achieved to give it the distinctive Lee Denim look and feel. And with the cool accessories and over the top Gola Classic shoes, jean lovers get full Lee experience in under one roof. So come visit the Lee store at the Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City and enter the new style territory.

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VANILLA GALS Lecky Caringal and Kathy Webb

IS THAT YOU RU? [illegible] White Glory [illegible] Ed Angel [illegible] with Christine San Diego and [illegible]

Seeing red, white and blue

Tim Yap

IT WAS a Saturday night and we were on our way to Gourmands, a resto café at the Fort area. We were looking for a place to have a quick dinner before hopping to the night's festivities. Our friend's mom, who knew the owner of the restaurant, stepped down first to check if there was any room. "It's always fully booked," she told us.

She entered the restaurant situated within the Forbes Town area and the chef-owner welcomed her with open arms. "Good," we thought to ourselves, as we prepared to alight from our vehicle and into the casual dining French resto.

She went back into the car and told us "Sorry, they can't accommodate us, let's just go to Le Soufflé," and gamely went to the other side of the Fort to have dinner. No questions asked, no hard feelings.

So what's the point of my story? I've never felt so good being rejected at a restaurant. In a city where all BCR (bar, club and resto) owners feel that the more packed the place is, the better, Gourmands is a refreshing change.

Us Pinoys have this greedy way of trying to accommodate everyone, even if it means that the patron is seated at a table near the bathroom or beside the kitchen exhaust. In

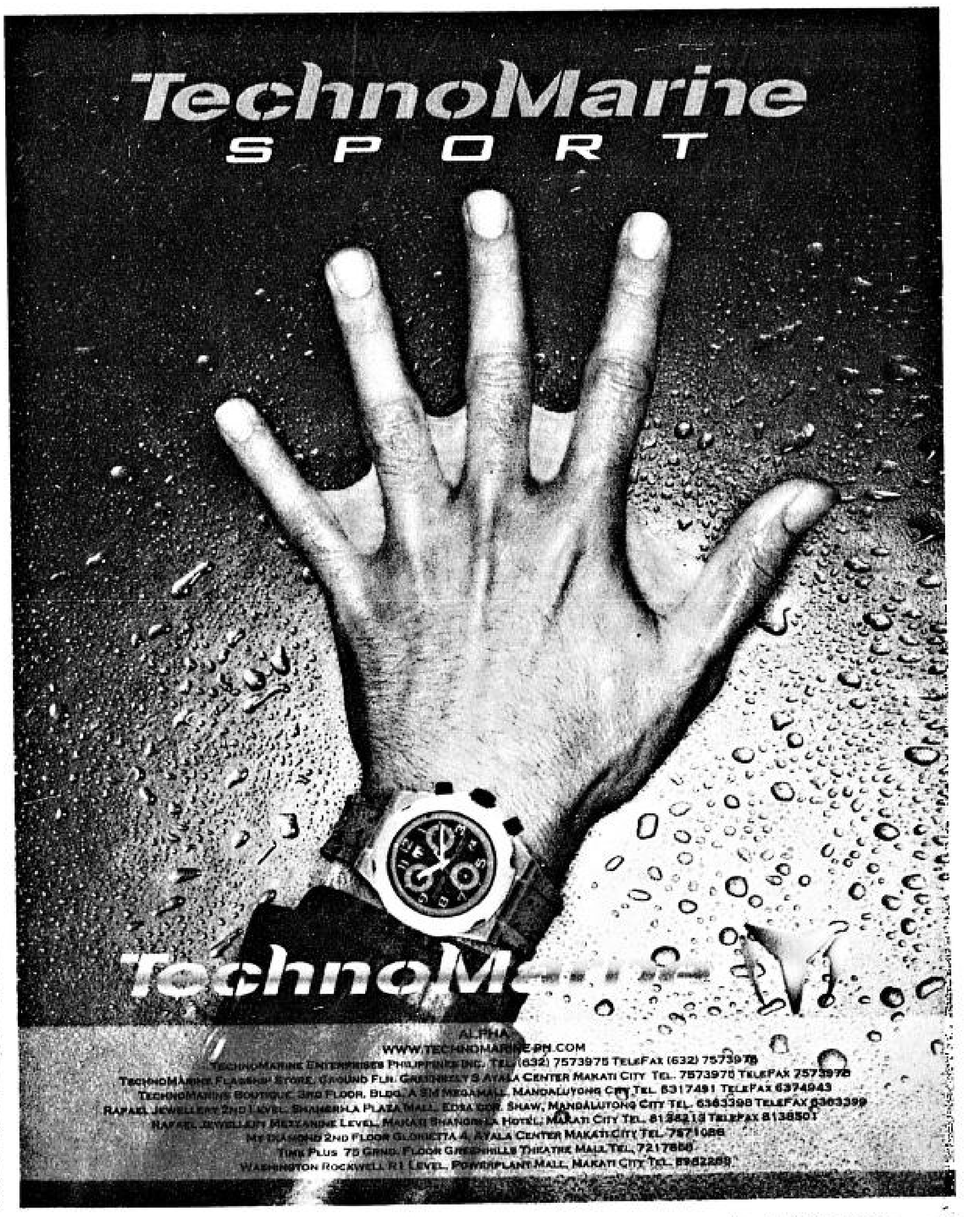
SEEING/ G3

WHITE HIGH [illegible]

EXPOSURE

ABSOLUTELY [illegible]

COSMO CHEERS



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Seeing red, white and blue

VA-VA-VANILIA. Cirque Du Soleil-esque performance to unveil Absolut Vanilia

FOR adults only

VANILIA GALS. Leah Caringal and Kathy Webb

IS THAT YOU RU? Eight-foot-tall White Glory aka Ed Aniel together with Christine San Diego and Morten Bremelhoel

Tim Yap

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Us Pinoys have this greedy way of trying to accommodate everyone, even if it means that the patron is seated at a table near the bathroom or beside the kitchen exhaust. In

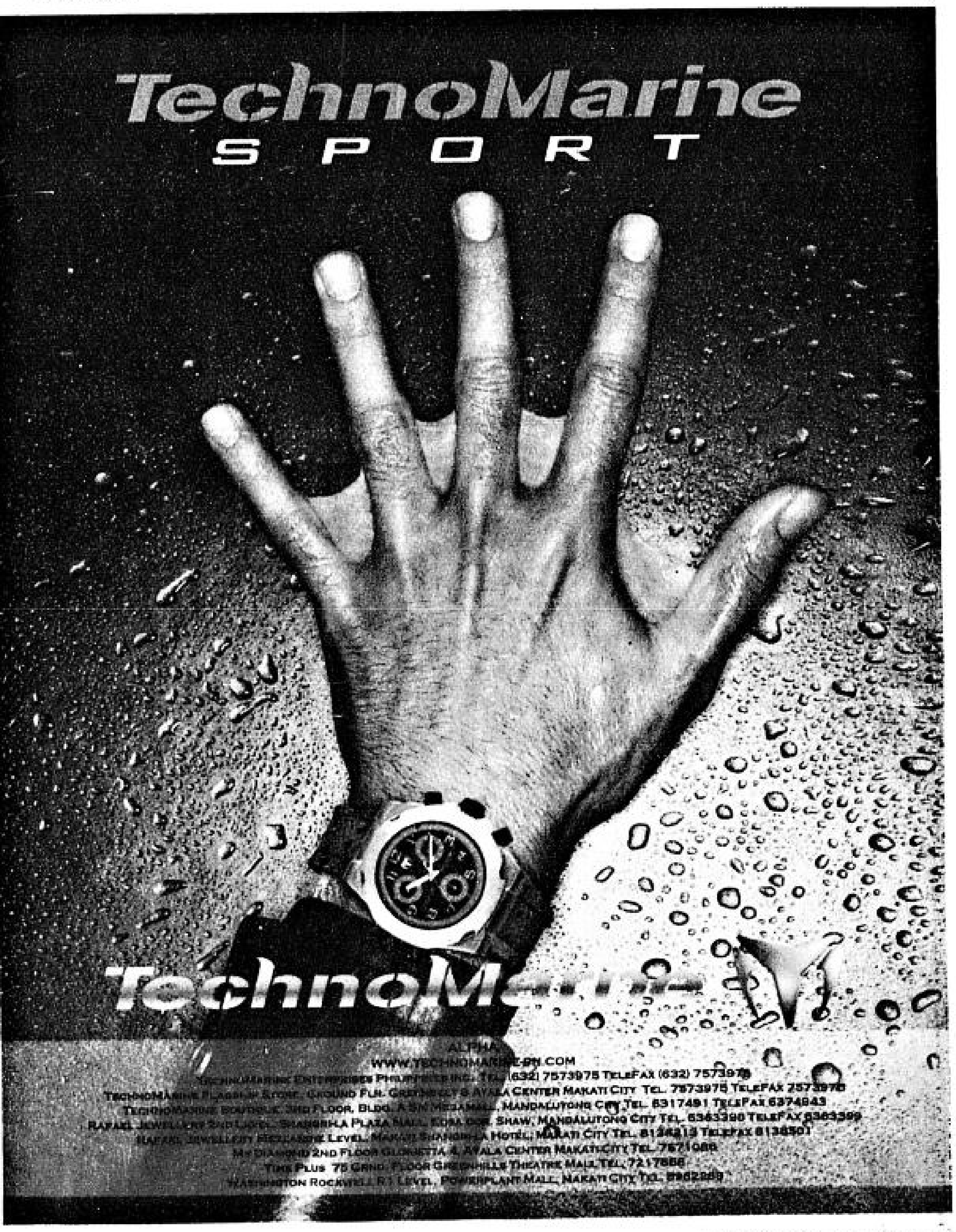
SEEING/G3

WHITE HIGH. Soprano Rina Saper Santos

MAXIMUM EXPOSURE. [illegible]

ABSOLUT-LY FAB. [illegible] Legman

COSMO CHEERS! From [illegible]



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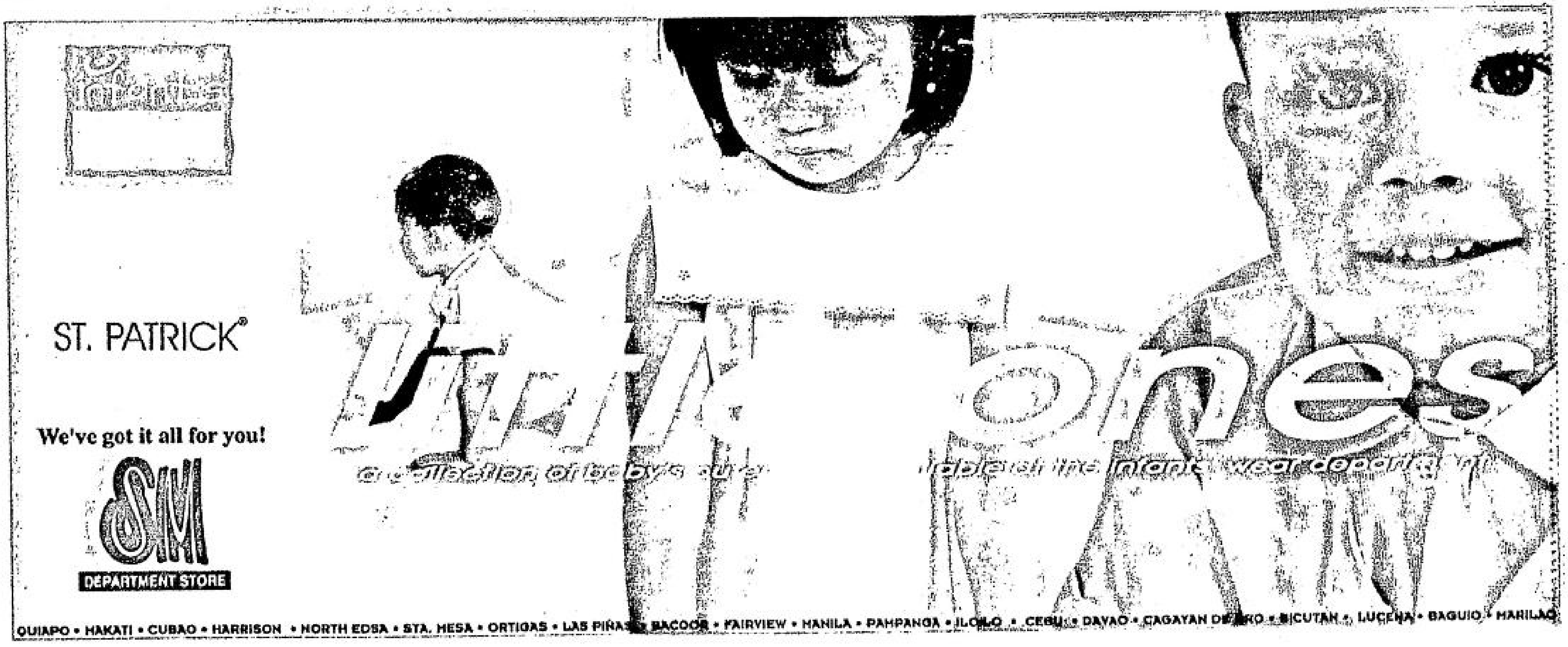

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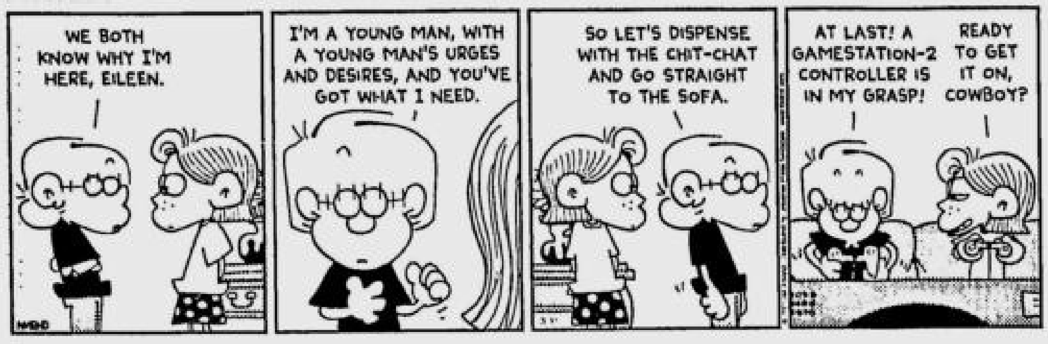
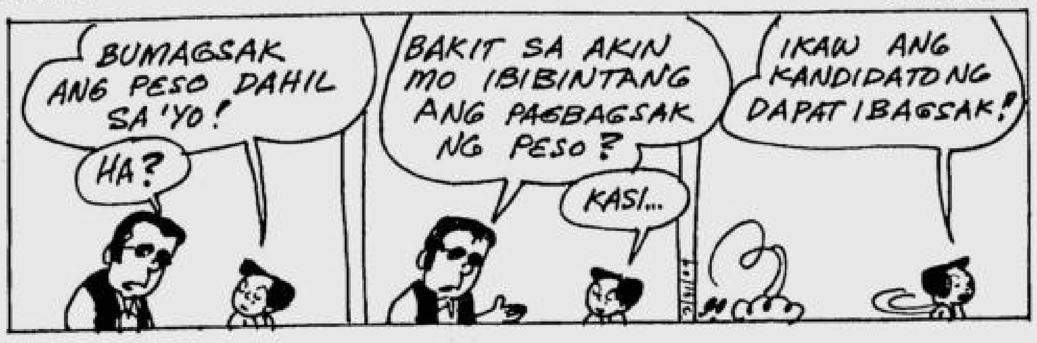
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WE BOTH KNOW WHY I'M HERE, EILEEN.
I'M A YOUNG MAN, WITH A YOUNG MAN'S URGES AND DESIRES, AND YOU'VE GOT WHAT I NEED.
SO LET'S DISPENSE WITH THE CHIT-CHAT AND GO STRAIGHT TO THE SOFA.
AT LAST! A GAMESTATION-2 CONTROLLER IS IN MY GRASP!
READY TO GET IT ON, COWBOY?

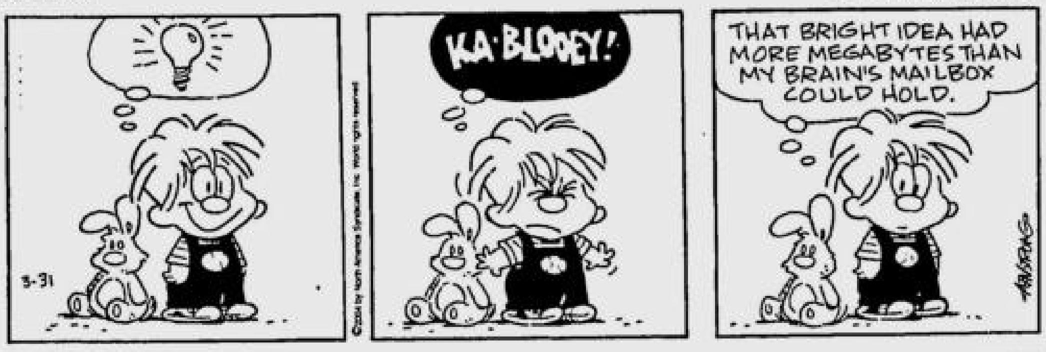
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


BUMAGSAK ANG PESO DAHIL SA 'YO!
HA?
BAKIT SA AKIN MO IBIBINTANG ANG PAGBAGSAK NG PESO?
KASI...
IKAW ANG KANDIDATONG DAPAT IBAGSAK!

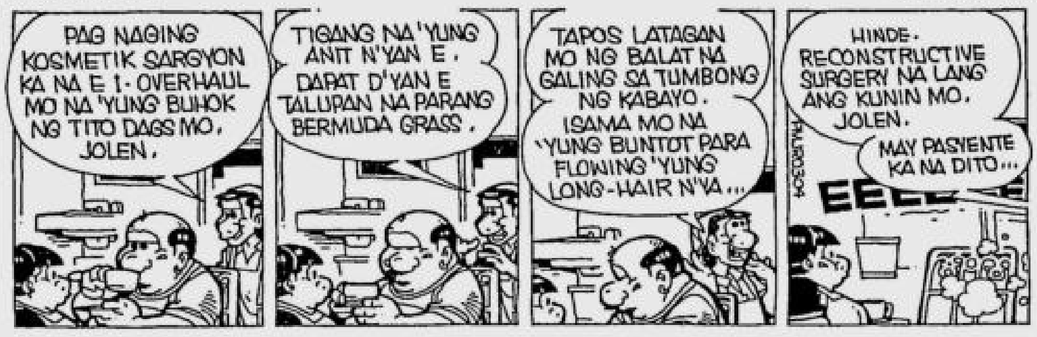
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


3-31
KA-BLOOEY!
THAT BRIGHT IDEA HAD MORE MEGABYTES THAN MY BRAIN'S MAILBOX COULD HOLD.

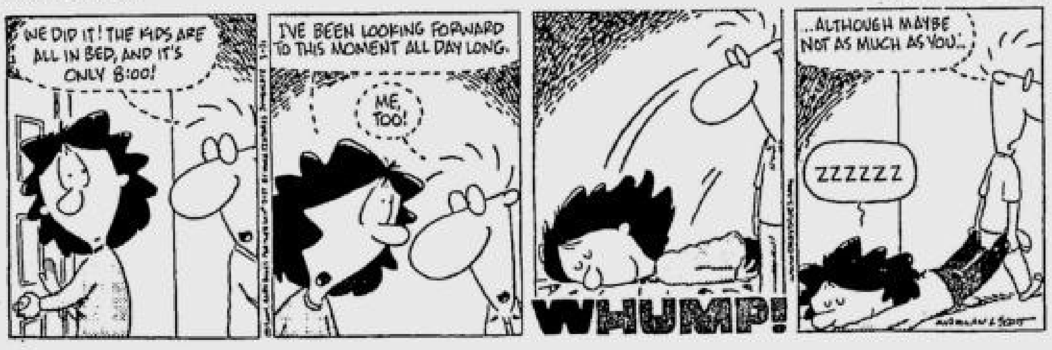
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


PAG NAGING KOSMETIK SARGYON KA NA E I-OVERHAUL MO NA 'YUNG BUHOK NG TITO DAGS MO, JOLEN.
TIGANG NA 'YUNG ANIT N'YAN E. DAPAT D'YAN E TALUPAN NA PARANG BERMUDA GRASS.
TAPOS LATAGAN MO NG BALAT NA GALING SA TUMBONG NG KABAYO.
ISAMA MO NA 'YUNG BUNTOT PARA FLOWING 'YUNG LONG-HAIR N'YA...
HINDE. RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY NA LANG ANG KUNIN MO, JOLEN.
MAY PASYENTE KA NA DITO...
EEE

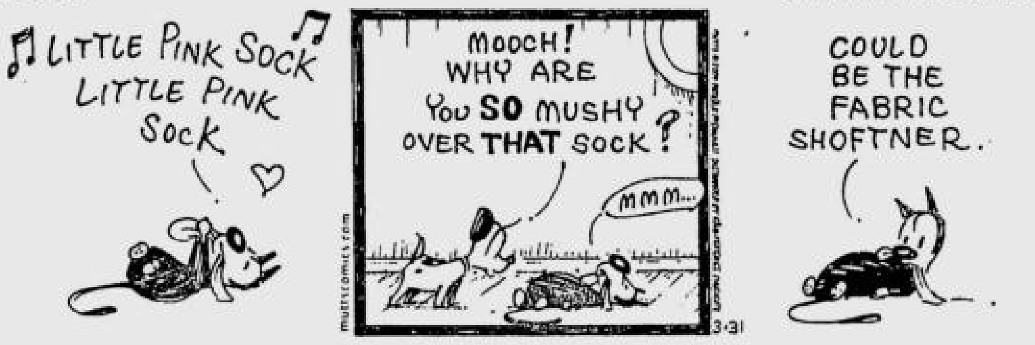
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WE DID IT! THE KIDS ARE ALL IN BED, AND IT'S ONLY 8:00!
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS MOMENT ALL DAY LONG.
ME, TOO!
WHUMP!
...ALTHOUGH MAYBE NOT AS MUCH AS YOU...
ZZZZZZ

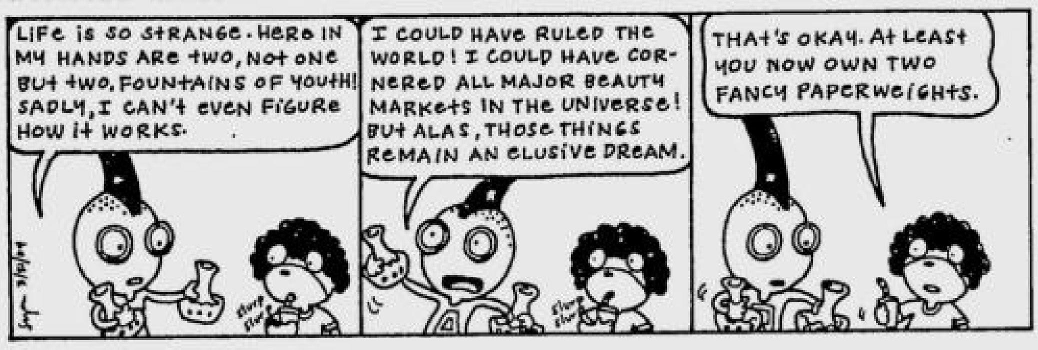
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


LITTLE PINK SOCK LITTLE PINK SOCK
MOOCH! WHY ARE YOU SO MUSHY OVER THAT SOCK?
MMM...
COULD BE THE FABRIC SHOFTNER.
3-31

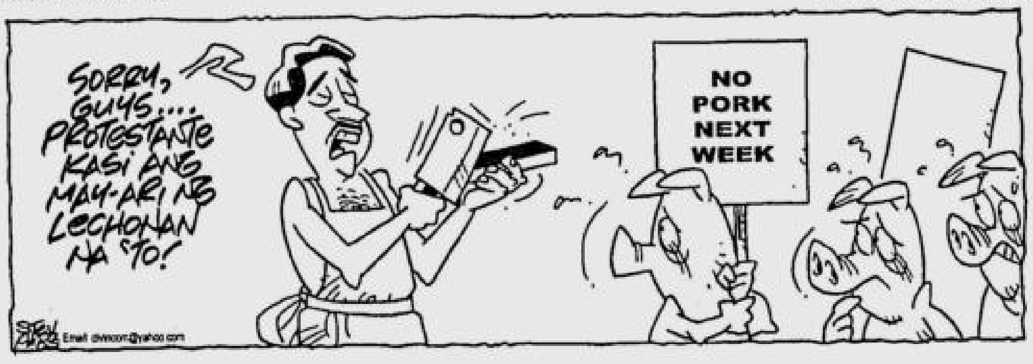
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


LIFE IS SO STRANGE. HERE IN MY HANDS ARE TWO, NOT ONE BUT TWO, FOUNTAINS OF YOUTH! SADLY, I CAN'T EVEN FIGURE HOW IT WORKS.
I COULD HAVE RULED THE WORLD! I COULD HAVE CORNERED ALL MAJOR BEAUTY MARKETS IN THE UNIVERSE! BUT ALAS, THOSE THINGS REMAIN AN ELUSIVE DREAM.
THAT'S OKAY. AT LEAST YOU NOW OWN TWO FANCY PAPERWEIGHTS.

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


SORRY, GUYS.... PROTESTANTE KASI ANG MAY-ARI NG LECHONAN NA 'TO!
NO PORK NEXT WEEK

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You will fight for what you believe in. You are not a quitter. Your tenacity in sticking to your goals is a blessing. You perform well under pressure. You are resourceful, creative and practical. Others (especially bosses) appreciate your efforts. The year ahead is one in which you must work hard for rewards in 2005. **Birthdate of:** Gordie Howe, hockey player; Pavel Bure, hockey player; Ewan McGregor, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Your creative vibes are very strong today! Trust your talented instincts. Your pioneering nature makes your choices bolder than what others might choose.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Conversations with bosses, superiors and parents are like two ships passing in the night. Neither party understands the other. Confusion runs rampant! (Have patience.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is not an ideal day for important negotiations or signing contracts. You're not seeing the picture clearly. It's as if you have Vaseline on your lens. Postpone this if you can.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Wanting something doesn't make it so. Bruce's grandmother always said: "Wantin' ain't gettin'." Delay important purchases. You might see things differently in a few days.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): It's easy to deceive yourself in important relationships today. You want to escape from anything that's unpleasant. Unfortunately, things don't just fade away; you have to deal them eventually.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Be careful about volunteering for anything at work today. Your good intentions could land you in trouble. Things might look rosier than they actually are.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You have a strong emotional reaction to children and to artistic matters today. Be careful that you don't deceive yourself about something. It's hard to know what you really want right now.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Don't bite off more than you can chew when making promises to bosses and parents today. Your eagerness to please might make you agree to something that is actually unrealistic.

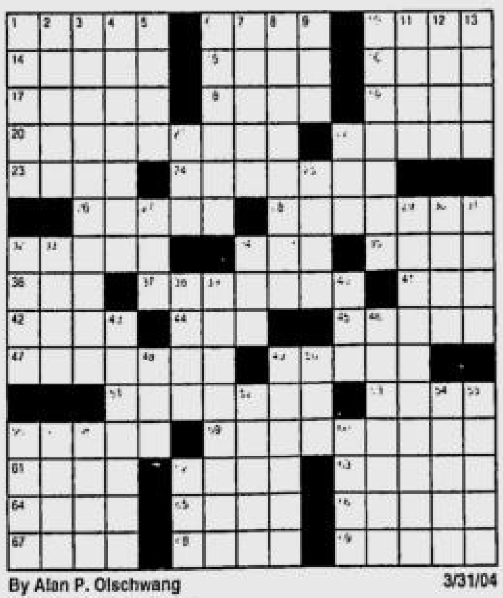
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a great day for daydreaming. You're filled with "what if" thoughts. The truth is that you would like to escape somewhere. (Anywhere but here!)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You're tempted to blow a lot of money on something quite luxurious today. You might think it will give you status. (Your reputation matters.) More likely, it will make you broke.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Take everything that happens with close partners today with a grain of salt. Conversations are confused and easily misunderstood. Use patience.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You are kind and sensitive to others. Today, you're tempted to go more than halfway to help someone who is less fortunate. While this is an excellent impulse, be realistic about what you can do.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

3/31/04

ACROSS
1 Thermoplastic resin
6 Musial or Lee
10 __ Bator, Mongolia
14 Varnish ingredient
15 Movie: pref.
16 Palm thatch
17 Meat pastes
18 Director Preminger
19 Consider
20 Start of Mae West quote
22 Part 2 of quote
23 Lady's man
24 Maritime
26 Kind of perception
28 In a tawdry manner
32 Little nails
34 __ Moines, IA
35 Hook's right-hand man
36 Ely or Howard
37 Part 3 of quote
41 Mil. captive
42 Como __ Usted?
44 100 square meters
45 Amherst sch.
47 Make like new
49 Principle
51 Tornado
53 Outer edges
56 Part 4 of quote
59 End of quote
61 Kind of frost
62 Narrow secluded valley
63 Vedas reader
64 Scots Gaelic
65 Legendary loch
66 Open sore
67 New Jersey team
68 Food on the hoof
69 Flash of light

DOWN
1 Flower part
2 Place to remember
3 Delaying agents
4 Changed for the better
5 Unless, in law
6 Word with pine or tape
7 Church contribution
8 Long-tongued predator
9 Keanu in "The Matrix"
10 Disconnects from the space shuttle
11 In __ of
12 Simians
13 Designate
21 Ready alternative
22 __ jacet
25 Editorial cartoonist of old
27 Greek letter
29 Restlessness
30 Most born in August
31 Poisonous evergreens
32 Fox's title
33 Ballplayer Pete
34 Female rabbit
38 Rani's wrap
39 Grappler
40 Attila the __
43 Outfits
46 Actress Dina
48 Possess
49 Very little
50 Pause fillers
52 The ones here
54 Euripides play
55 __ und Drang
56 Subsequently
57 Had on
58 Tobacco kiln
60 Hoodlum
62 Econ. meas.

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

S	A	L	A	D		S	I	D	S		H	A	L	O
I	S	E	R	E		L	O	A	M		O	R	A	L
K	E	V	I	N		A	T	L	I		M	E	S	S
H	A	I	L	I	N	V	A	I	L		E	A	S	E
				A	E	S			A	L	I	S	O	N
T	A	C	K	L	E		T	E	X	A	N			
E	L	L	E		D	E	A	L		B	R	I	M	S
S	T	A	N		S	A	L	S	A		O	S	C	O
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C	O	R	N	E	T			A	B	A				
A	P	E	R		T	E	R	N	I	N	B	E	R	N
M	A	N	E		E	R	O	S		D	O	D	I	E
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O	S	L	O		D	E	A	N		D	E	T	E	R

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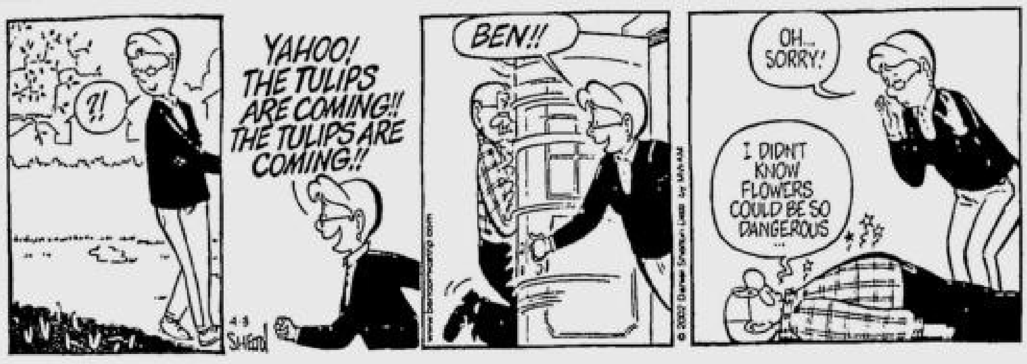
3/31/04

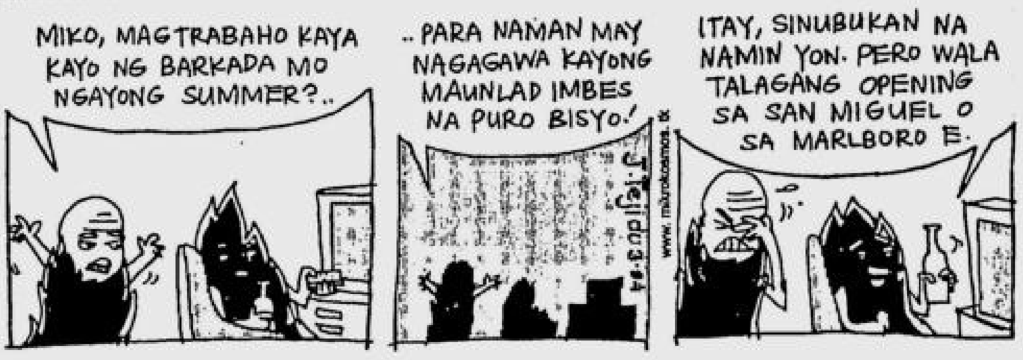
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


?!
YAHOO! THE TULIPS ARE COMING!! THE TULIPS ARE COMING!!
BEN!!
OH... SORRY!
I DIDN'T KNOW FLOWERS COULD BE SO DANGEROUS...

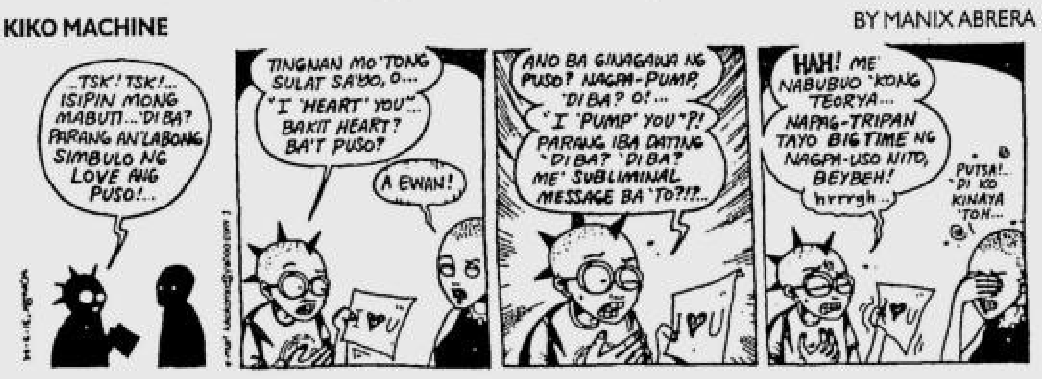
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MIKO, MAGTRABAHO KAYA KAYO NG BARKADA MO NGAYONG SUMMER?..
..PARA NAMAN MAY NAGAGAWA KAYONG MAUNLAD IMBES NA PURO BISYO.!
ITAY, SINUBUKAN NA NAMIN YON. PERO WALA TALAGANG OPENING SA SAN MIGUEL O SA MARLBORO E.

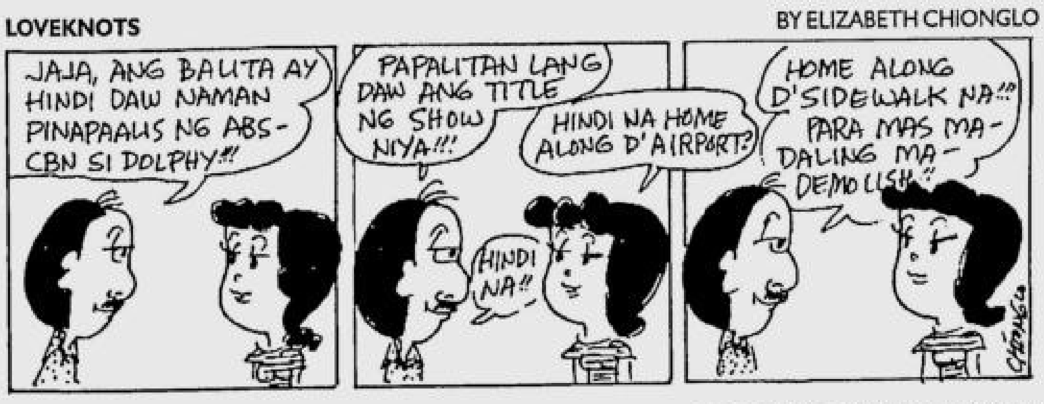
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


..TSK! TSK!... ISIPIN MONG MABUTI...'DI BA? PARANG AN'LABONG SIMBULO NG LOVE ANG PUSO!..
TINGNAN MO 'TONG SULAT SA'YO, O... "I 'HEART' YOU"... BAKIT HEART? BA'T PUSO?
A EWAN!
ANO BA GINAGAWA NG PUSO? NAGPA-PUMP, 'DI BA? O!... "I 'PUMP' YOU"?! PARANG IBA DATING 'DI BA? 'DI BA? ME' SUBLIMINAL MESSAGE BA 'TO?!?...
HAH! ME' NABUBUO 'KONG TEORYA... NAPAG-TRIPAN TAYO BIG TIME NG NAGPA-USO NITO, BEYBEH! hrrrgh...
PUTSA!.. DI KO KINAYA 'TON...
I ♥ U

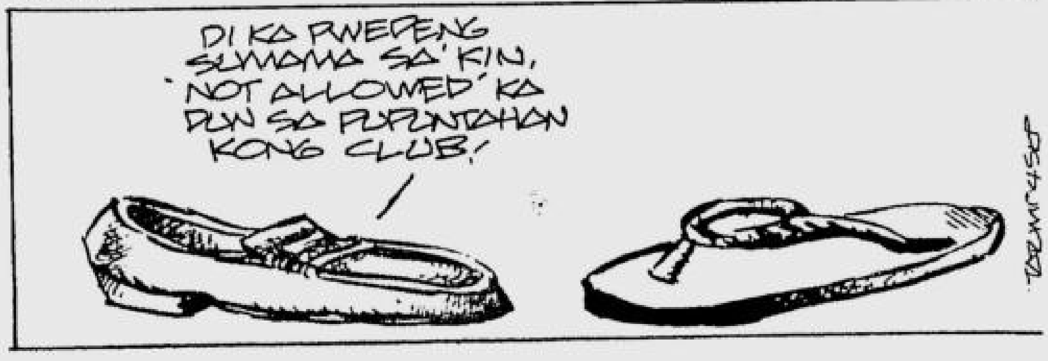
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA, ANG BALITA AY HINDI DAW NAMAN PINAPAALIS NG ABS-CBN SI DOLPHY!!
PAPALITAN LANG DAW ANG TITLE NG SHOW NIYA!!!
HINDI NA HOME ALONG D'AIRPORT?
HINDI NA!!
HOME ALONG D'SIDEWALK NA!! PARA MAS MADALING MA-DEMOLISH.

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


DI KA PWEDENG SUMAMA SA'KIN, 'NOT ALLOWED' KA DUN SA PUPUNTAHAN KONG CLUB!

HIP, YOUNG SET. Quito Lopez, Ana Martha Moreno, Joel Tantoco of U, Victoria London and Chris Petterson

FCUK IT. DJ Mumph Ruiz, Kat Tantoco, Ricardo Garcia with soon-to-be-married Dino Araneta and Marta Tuason-Luque

LOVIN' IT. Samantha Yen, Lookie Villaraza, Celine Gabriel and Angela Reyes

BLUE MOON. Hostess Tessa Nieto

BLUES CLUES. Ricky Torres, Amanda Carpo, Vicky de Leon, Joey Carpo and Howard Vitas

Seeing red, white and blue

From page G1

doing so, the BCR owners fail to take care of the patrons who got there first, who are close to suffocating because of the packed area. A friend once saw a girl faint in a bar. All the people were clutching their drinks like they were inside a jammed elevator. Nobody wanted to move from her spot. Hey, remember Ozone?

On the other side of the fence, those who are declined at the door should not fret—it's really nothing personal. Did you call ahead to make a reservation? Maybe the place is indeed too packed and can't accommodate you sucking off any more oxygen from the venue (unless you bring a plant along) or maybe your most recent ex is there cavorting with a new flame, or worse, your parents might be inside partying harder than you (this goes for the summer-break kids).

These days, with the weather getting hotter and hotter, the best attitude to have is of that good ol' Pinoy sense of humor, since everything around us, from show biz, politics and real life—is funny anyway.

FCUK-ed up

Midweek's party high came in the form of a jukebox-inducing, FCUK-ing fashion treat! Yup, ladies and gentlemen obsessed with hip and happening brands, French Connection UK is here!

The Polo Club field was filled with hipsters of all ages, who braved the summer heat just to get FCUK-ed up. **Issa Litton** and myself took turns on the table spinning music and hosting the show—a pulsating pastel parade of hunks and babes FCUk-ing each other!

Later, the neon stage and party setup doubled as a soiree venue where a band (with real-life rockstars **Kat Agarado, Nathan Azarcon** and **Ira Cruz** jamming) churned out old school rock and roll hits.

Colors everywhere, saucy members of the young set, and a fun, new brand—hot, hot, hot! I just can't get over it—FCUK, FCUK, FCUK!

Bluer than blue

6750's Dreambar, once upon a time a ghost town of a night spot, is one of the busiest these past few seasons. With retro and house nights packing the crowds in (without the "low-flying doves"—just translate into Filipino—you'll get it. Wink, wink.), Dreambar has once again thrust itself into the center of the city's party map.

An intoxicating treat was Wednesday's launch of the Ralph Lauren Blue scent. For that, the bar was transformed into a beach—with real pebbled sand overflowing among the flip flop-clad guests. Puka-shell bracelets greeted the partyphiles as a whiff of Blue fragrance circulated around the room.

Blue cocktails heightened the sexy sensations, as DJ **Manolet Dario** provided aural delight. **Wendell Garcia** and **Tessa Nieto** hosted L'Oreal's sexiest summer shebang with the city's scene shakers in full force.

Vanilia ice ice, baby!

The weekend brought a barrage of events and parties (aside from the normal birthday and graduation happenings all over) but the most awaited of all, is the introduction of Absolut's sexy, naughty new variant, Vanilia.

A more robust Vanilia was unveiled via an all-white night of soprano singers, acrobats, drag queens and other seductive characters in true-blue (or white) Absolut way. Upon reaching the Forbes Town complex, **Sofia Genato** of Maxxium immediately handed me a martini glass of the sweet and sexy concoction I love—a complex taste of vanilla with notes of butterscotch and hints of dark chocolate!

"This is not your average vanilla—this is the adult version, and we believe the name suits it—Vanilia," says Absolut's **Eva Kempe-Forsberg** with a wink.

It was so good that I didn't mind missing the Cirque Du Soleil type of performance and model mania that ushered in the unveiling of the giant white bottle at the outdoor area.

Then again, there were too many cuties that I didn't mind just mingling around, as I mixed my Absolut Vanilia with ginger ale, fresh lime juice, cola—on the rocks...

Summer is here to stay—have a Super! fun time, dear partyphiles.

L'OREAL LADIES. Francesca Colayco and Erica Carpo

METRO WEAR. Fiona Lucas and Trish Chua

RATED RUSTANS. Marivic and Dino Pineda

SPIN A WHEEL. Manolet Dario at Dreambar 6750

PARTY ADDICTION. Borgy Manotoc and Yaparazzi

SUMMER [illegible]

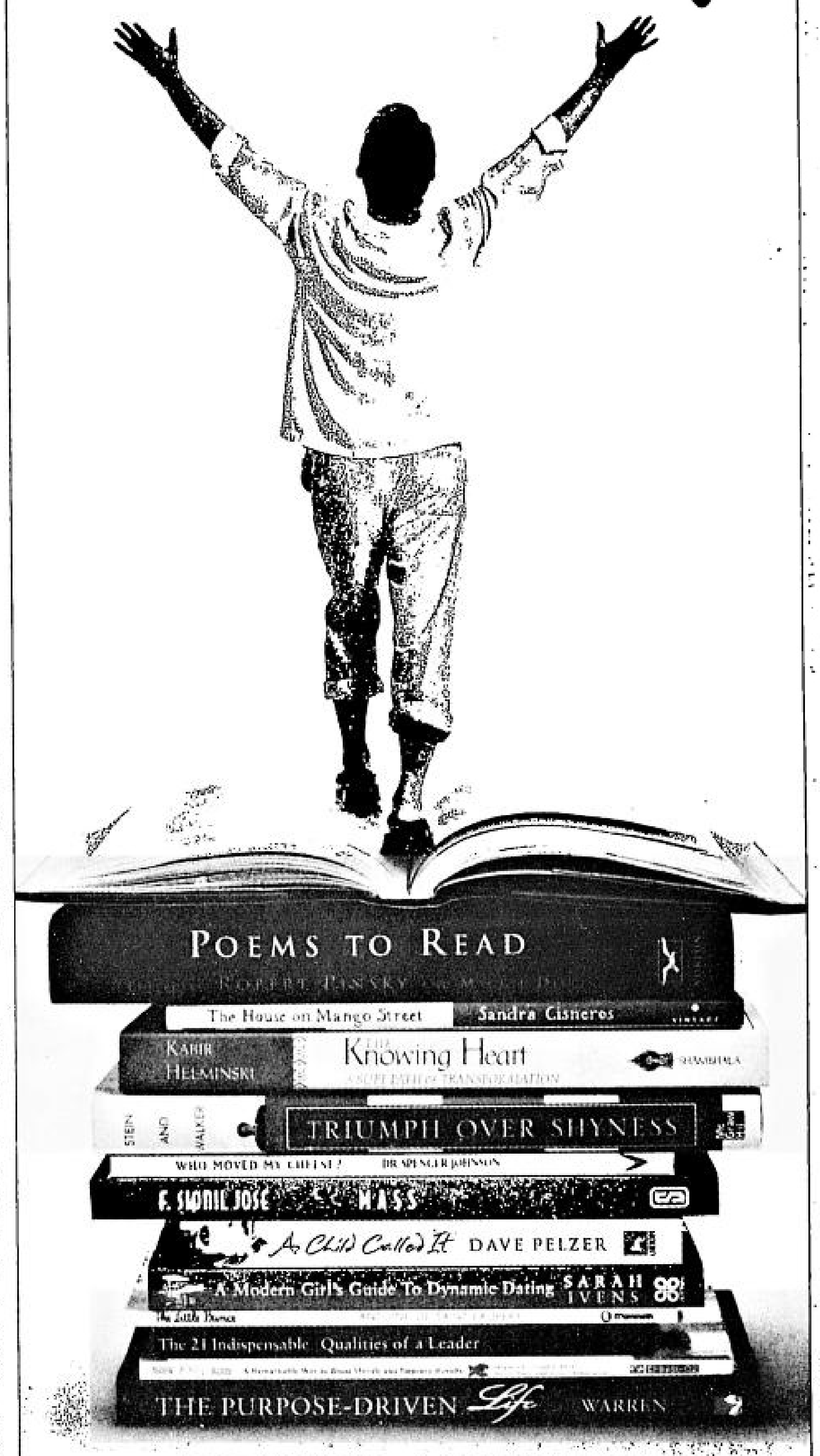
MEGA MOTION. [illegible]

RUSTAN'S MUSES. Hindy and Cricket Tantoco

BEACH BOHEMIAN. Matt Lim and Celine Gabriel at the Blue party

BLUE LADIES. Ria Romero and Cris Golamco

Has a BOOK changed YOUR LIFE?



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in the way we look at life and how we live it.
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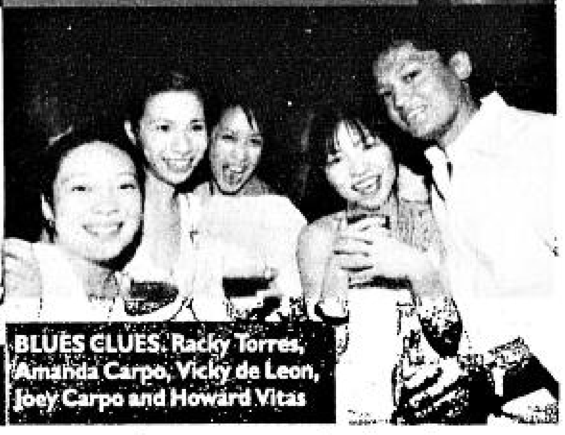

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Seeing red, white and blue

METRO WEAR. Fiona Lucas and Trish Chua

L'OREAL LADIES. Francesca Colayco and Leica Carpo

RATED RUSTANS. Marivic and Dino Pineda

SPIN A WHEEL. Manolet Dario at Dreambar 6750

PARTY ADDICTION. Borgy Manotoc and Yaparazzi

SUMMER surfin with Paolo Araneta

MEGA MOTION. Tina Tinio and Xeng Zulueta of Shu Uemura

RUSTAN'S MUSES. Hindy and Cricket Tantoco

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BLUE LADIES. Ria Romero and Cris Golamco

From page G1

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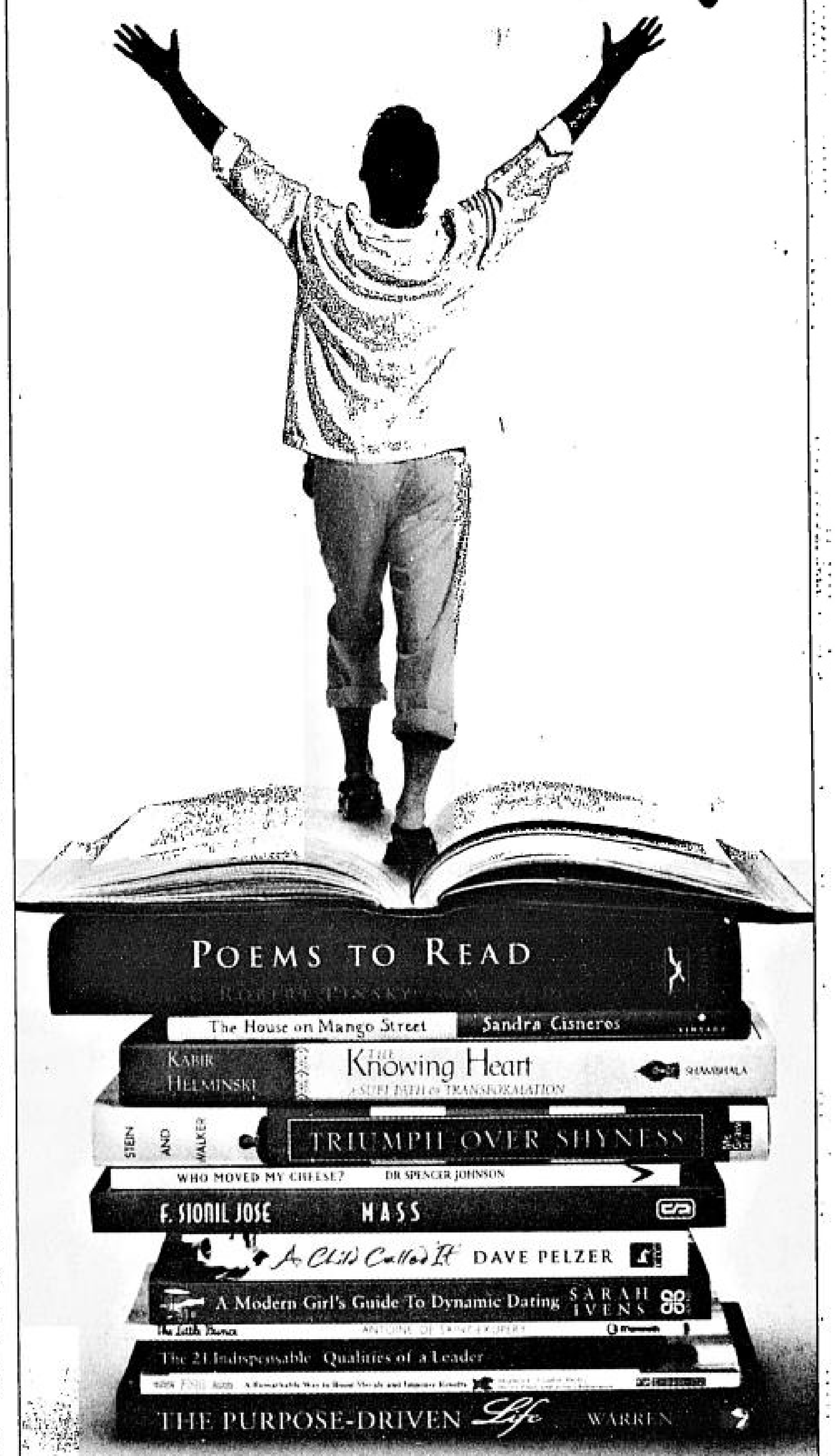
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The House on Mango Street Sandra Cisneros
Kabir Helminski The Knowing Heart
Triumph Over Shyness
Who Moved My Cheese? Dr Spencer Johnson
F. Sionil Jose Mass
A Child Called It Dave Pelzer
A Modern Girl's Guide To Dynamic Dating Sarah Ivens
The Little Prince Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader
The Purpose-Driven Life Warren

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Please
NESTEA
NESTEA
CIFIC

BALL-SMASHING action at the 8th Nestea Beach Volley Visayas-Mindanao eliminations

Block that ball!

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

SUN-BAKED sand court. Glistening brown bodies plunging into the *polvoron*-like sand. Serves. Blocks. Spikes. A ball being volleyed like that bouncing ball in those sing-along vids. Oh, and lots of Nestea guzzling too.

That was the sceno in Cebu last May 12-14 as the 8th Nestea Beach Volley held its Visayas-Mindanao eliminations near the lagoon area of the Ayala Center, complete with a manmade sand court teeming with 250 cu m of quarry sand right smack in the middle of the city.

After the Luzon elims which saw the men's teams of De La Salle University, University of the Philippines-Diliman, College of St. Benilde and Far Eastern University and the women's teams of College of St. Benilde, Letran, University of Baguio and Adamson University conquering the crushed lime stones of a manmade court right outside Rockwell, it was time for various schools from the Vis-Min regions to battle for the limited slots to the Nestea Beach Volley Finals happening in Boracay on April 16 to 18. Each men's and women's champion team will receive P100,000, and their schools will also get P50,000 worth of sports equipment.

Students, shoppers, strangers and even foreigners in Cebu were treated to a hefty serving of sweat-inducing beach volley action as students from Visayas served, spiked and blocked for an all-important slot in the finals. After all the spikes and sweat though, only four teams from each division would get to dip their toes in Boracay's fine sands this April.

Male pairs from University of San Jose Recoletos (last year's runner-up), Foundation University, University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos and Iloilo Doctors College (composed of brothers) are now officially Boracay-bound, while the female spikers of University of the Visayas, defending women's champions Southwestern University, University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos and University of San Agustin are headed to the same beautiful island.

And since getting into the semis means a plane ticket to Boracay, a send-off party was thrown for the semifinalists at Kaona Grill, where the pooped players and coaches were awarded with certificates and Nestlé gift packs.

Triumphant teams from Mindanao were also in for a treat as a victory party was waiting for them at the Bigby's Café after the exciting matches. It was a night to remember for the victorious men's teams of Mindanao State University, University of Mindanao-Tagum, University of Mindanao and Ateneo de Davao University; a night of fun, celebration and sighs of relief, especially for the winning girls of University of Mindanao-Tagum, Ateneo de Davao University, Holy Cross of Davao and Mindanao State University.

After a sizzling afternoon of stiff sand court competition, the winning schools gorged themselves crazy for a match well played. Another treat was the unveiling of a music video for the Nestea jingle written by Rivermaya's Rico Blanco, a vid that showcased the participants' spiking skills, winning forms and videocam-worthy boo-boos.

Eighth year

The annual Nestea Beach Volley is now on its eighth year and is showing no signs of stopping. In fact, "We're the forefront in the tournament scene, *ginagawa nga tayong* best practice model. As we have been seeing, the players are getting exceptionally very good in the sport," says Nicky Limjap, Nestlé's assistant vice president for marketing promotions.

Johann Tan-Pho, Nestlé events specialist, concurs. "Part of our ambition is to have a worldwide tournament between the different markets."

The Filipinos are clearly on the right track when it comes to beach volley. And as some sort of pioneer in the game in the whole of Asia, the country's Nestea Beach Volley is itself considered a benchmark by neighboring countries.

Side by side with the Nestea Beach Volley meet is a promo called Nestea's Million Plunge. Just purchase Nestea Ice Tea in supermarkets, schools, restos and food courts and get a chance to win a trip for four to Boracay, plus prize money of—hold your breath—P1 million.

Fully supporting the 8th Nestea Beach Volley are Speedo, Cebu Pacific, Mikasa, Coppertone, Shakey's, Smart, Power Plant Mall, Ayala Center Cebu, Le Soleil de Boracay and TGI Friday's. A two-hour TV special hosted by Bianca Araneta is also scheduled to air this coming May, tentatively on ABC 5.

E-mail the author at katotino@yahoo.com.

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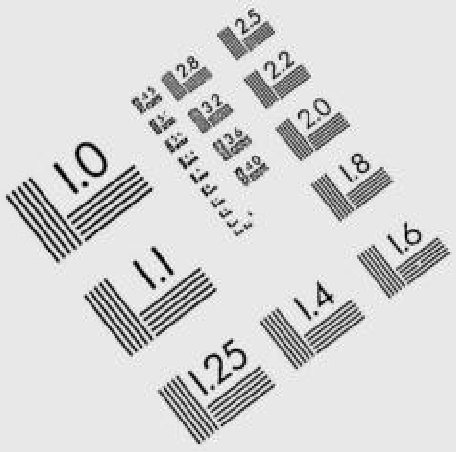
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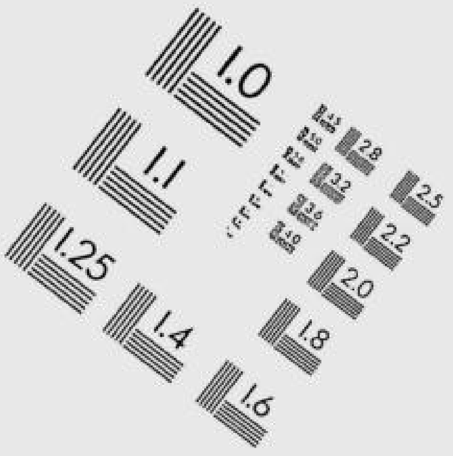
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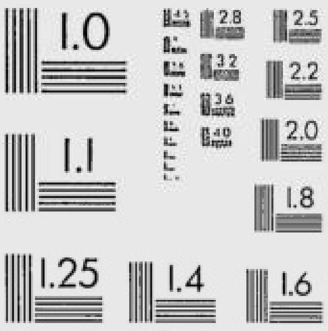
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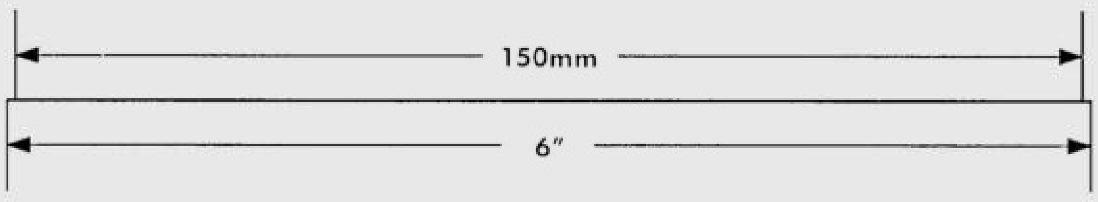

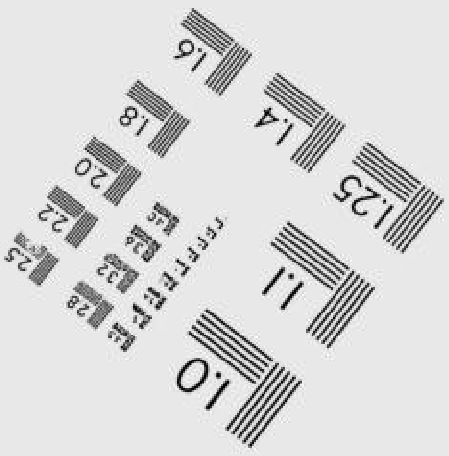
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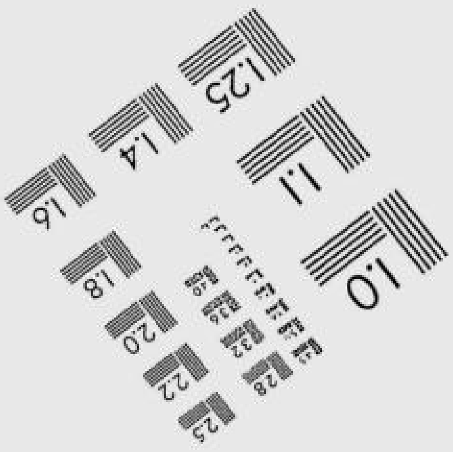
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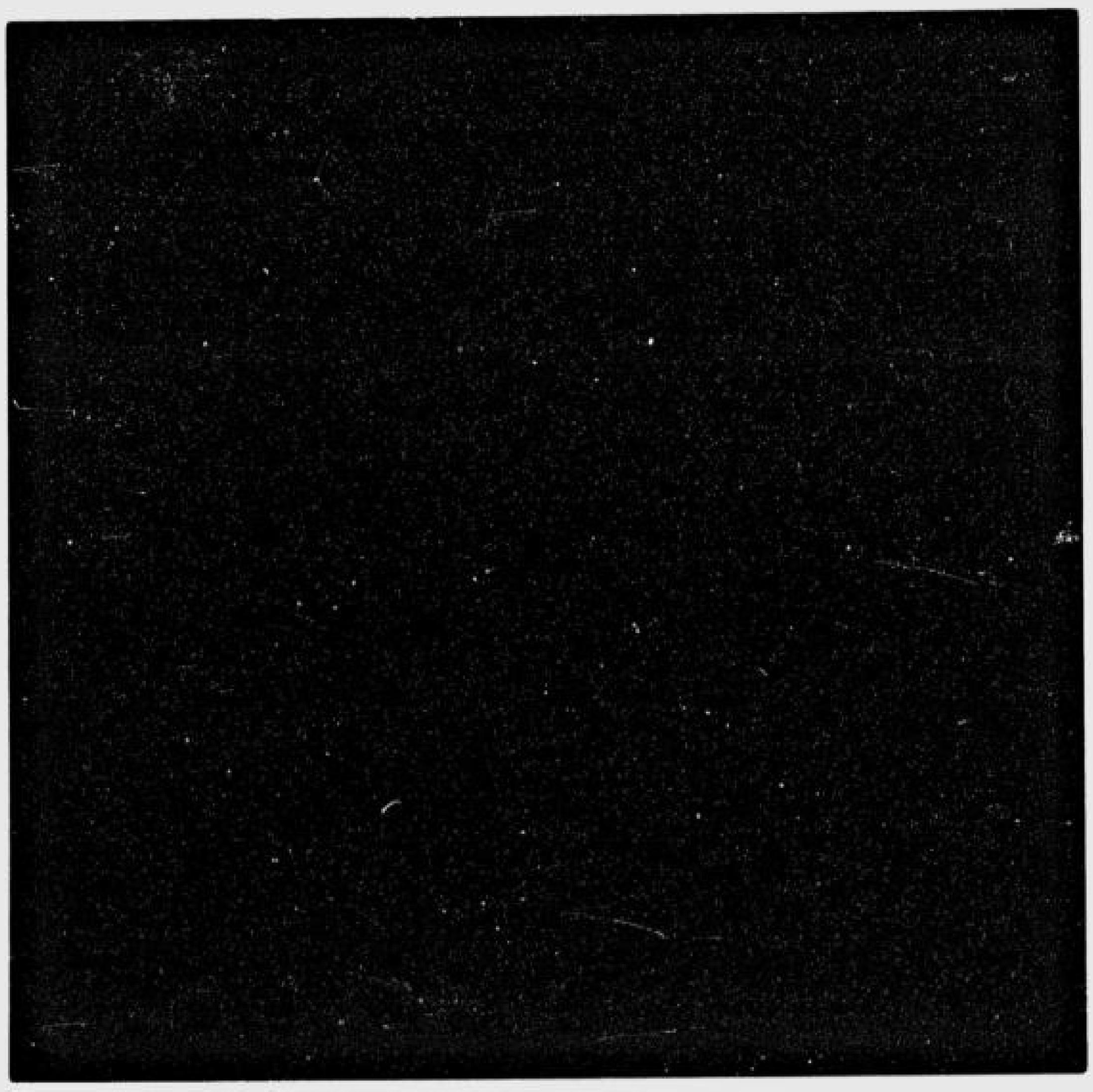

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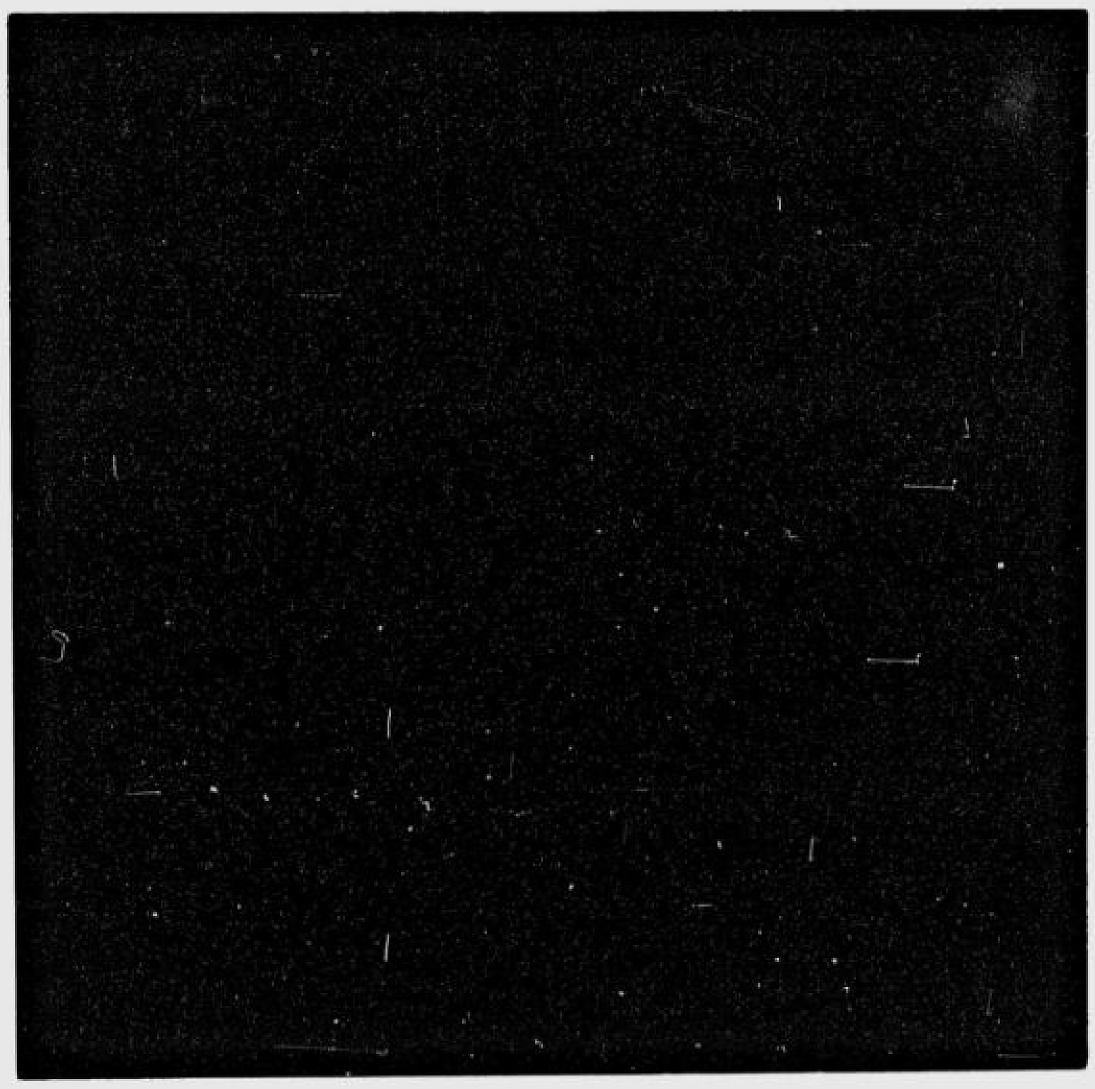
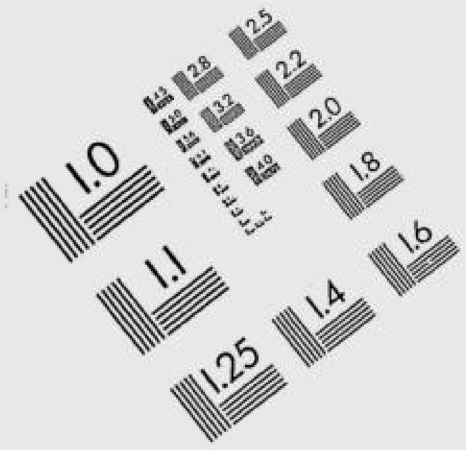


IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (MT-3)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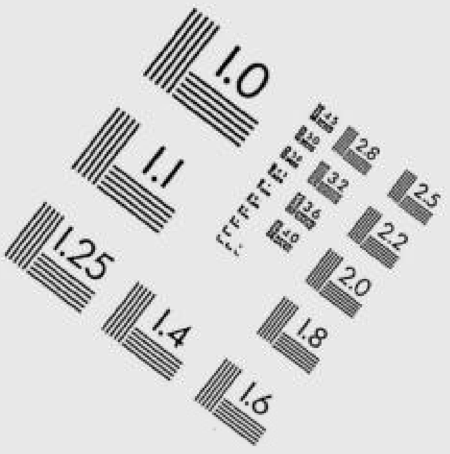
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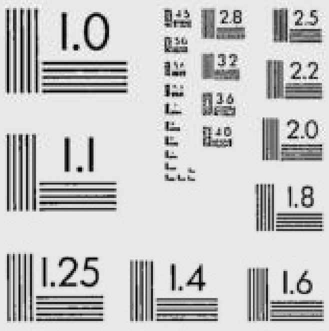
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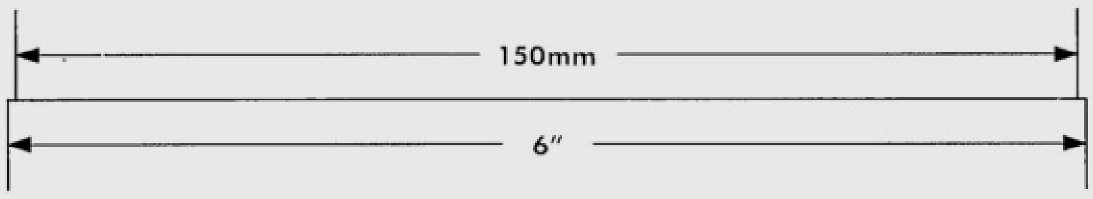

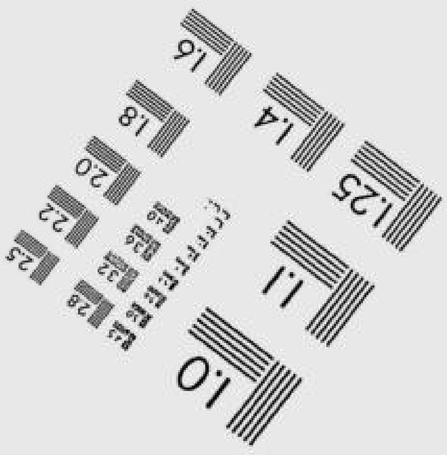
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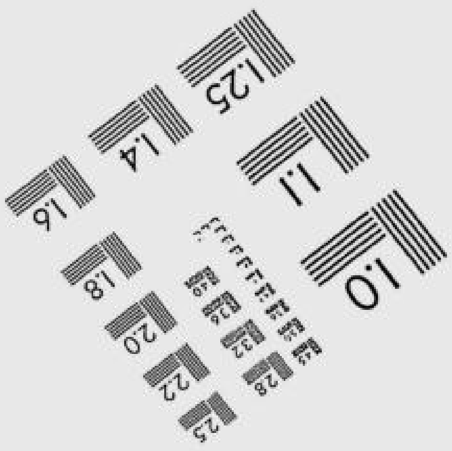
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